









North Carolina State Normal & Industrial College  
Historical Publications

Number 3

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ANTE-BELLUM BUILDERS OF NORTH CAROLINA

BY R. D. W. CONNOR

SECRETARY NORTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Lecturer on North Carolina History, State Normal College

Issued under the Direction of the Department of History

W. C. JACKSON, EDITOR

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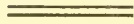
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# Preface



The contents of this number of the *Historical Publications* consist of a set of lectures delivered at the College, in the Spring of 1914, by Mr. R. D. W. Connor. This is the third set in the series of Mr. Connor's lectures, the former sets constituting Numbers 1 and 2 of these *Publications*.

THE EDITOR.

D. OF C.  
JUL 19 1916



# Ante-Bellum Builders of North Carolina

51

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## I

### INTRODUCTION

In the course of the lectures which it was my privilege to deliver before you last spring, as perhaps some of you may recall, I discussed the careers of four North Carolina statesmen of the Revolution, and through their activities traced the history of the State from the beginning of the revolt against the mother country in 1765, through the inauguration of the Revolution, the organization of the State government, and the achievement of independence, to the ratification of the Federal Constitution in 1789.

It is my present intention to take up the discussion at this point, and through the careers of four other North Carolina statesmen of a later period to study the educational, industrial and political achievements that characterized the history of North Carolina during the first half of the nineteenth century. But before entering upon the careers of these "Ante-Bellum Builders of North Carolina," it is necessary that we take a rapid survey of the field in which they toiled and of the conditions under which they labored. Today, therefore, I shall ask your attention to a brief discussion of the educational, industrial and political conditions that prevailed in North Carolina during the half-century from 1790 to 1840. We shall find in this survey, I fear, but little to arouse your interest and still less

to excite your pride, for I must tell you that during the whole of this period the State undertook no great enterprise for the material, intellectual or social betterment of her people, and that its story is the dreariest, most uninspiring chapter in our history. Nevertheless, if we look below the surface of the events of this period we shall discover the undercurrents of a great movement which, beginning in its early years and bringing it to a close in triumph, saves it from utter barrenness and makes it an instructive period for study. This movement was the origin, rise and growth of democracy without which neither the remarkable industrial and educational development of the two decades from 1840 to 1860, nor the heroic achievements of the State from 1860 to 1865, would have been possible.

I shall begin this survey with a glance at the educational conditions in North Carolina during these fifty years under consideration. Those of us who have lived to see the first monument ever erected to a North Carolina statesman entirely by popular subscription, erected to the founder of the State's leading college for women, and who have lived through the administration of a great Chief Magistrate of the Commonwealth whose highest claim to a permanent place in history is his service as "The Educational Governor," can scarcely realize the utter indifference to education that prevailed among the people of North Carolina from 1790 to 1840. To make these conditions as real as possible to you is the task which I now approach. It is not a pleasant task, yet, fortunately, it is not one void of instruction. Indeed, I know of no subject in North Carolina history that will better repay careful study than the

fifty years of agitation that preceded the establishment in 1840 of our ante-bellum common school system.

In 1786 a traveller of uncommon intelligence, after making a tour from Edenton to Charlotte, entered in his journal the assertion that no State in the Union at that period had done so little to promote the cause of education, science and the arts as North Carolina, and he observed that the great mass of the people were in a state of great mental degradation.<sup>1</sup> These statements are borne out by Archibald D. Murphey, who tells us that in 1794 there were but three schools in the State in which the rudiments of a classical education could be acquired, that in the best of these the opportunities for instruction were very limited, that except for a few Latin and Greek classics the students had access to no books of history or literature, and that it was impossible to realize the difficulties under which the student of that day labored in his search for an education.<sup>2</sup> This statement, the result of Murphey's own personal experience, was made in 1827, and even at that day the conditions had improved but little. Indeed, there were to be found intelligent people who did not think conditions were any better then than they were when North Carolina was a colony of the British Crown. Our historians have always found great satisfaction in excusing the lack of educational facilities in North Carolina during colonial days by declaring that the King vetoed every measure passed by the General

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1. Watson, Elkanah: *Men and Times of the Revolution*, 290.

2. Hoyt, W. Henry (ed): *Papers of Archibald D. Murphey* (In Press).

Assembly for the establishment of public schools; but we can lay no such unction to our souls nor ease our minds by thus shifting to the shoulders of an unpopular potentate the blame for lack of educational facilities fifty years after the Declaration of Independence. In 1826, the semi-centennial year of independence, a governor of North Carolina in his annual message to the Legislature, told the lawmakers of the State that many enlightened persons believed that it was more difficult to obtain a primary education in North Carolina at that time than it was in 1776.<sup>1</sup>

There has come down to us a description of educational conditions in Edgecombe, a typical eastern county, and in Caswell, a typical western county, in 1810, and these two counties may safely be taken as typical of the State. The former description was written by Dr. Jeremiah Battle, a prominent physician of Edgecombe, the latter by Bartlett Yancey, one of the most distinguished men the State has produced.<sup>2</sup> Both made a careful study of all the data available before preparing their articles which we may, accordingly, accept as accurate and reliable.

Dr. Battle declares that a thirst for knowledge had never distinguished the people of Edgecombe, a statement easily enough accepted for it is coupled with another statement that out of a total white population of about eight thousand, only 108 persons could be found who subscribed to a newspaper. For fifty

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1. Gov. Burton to the General Assembly. Coon, Charles L., (ed): *Public Education in North Carolina, 1790-1840*, Vol. I., 294.

2. *Ibid.* I., 64-72.

years the county had boasted of but two schools, and before the opening of the University in 1795 "no children were sent out of the county to any college or academy." In 1810 there were seventeen schools in the county but none of them attempted to teach anything beyond the elements of reading, writing and arithmetic, and but few of the teachers were competent to teach these. Dr. Battle laments the general indifference to education prevalent among the people. How general this indifference was is evident from the fact that not more than two-thirds of the people could read, and that not above one-half the men and one-third the women could write their names. It is no wonder, therefore, that Dr. Battle was compelled to confess that "the county has never been prolific in men of talents, or they have been obscured for want of opportunities of education."

Bartlett Yancey sets for himself the task of describing the "progress of society and civilization" in Caswell county, which, he observes, is dependent upon "the education and virtue of the people." This progress, he declares, was greater in the decade from 1800 to 1810 than during the fifty years preceding. It is interesting to note the facts from which he draws his conclusions. In 1800 not more than one-half the people could "read, write and cypher as far as the rule of three," and in 1810 "many of the inferior class of society appear more depraved than ever." At that time but one academy was in operation in the county, and since 1805 the number of students enrolled in that one had decreased from sixty-five to thirty-eight. It is true another academy had until recently been in existence, but for the last five years it had been "on a decline," and in July, 1810,

“some vile incendiary put fire to it for the purpose of consuming it,” which purpose was very effectually accomplished. Yancey reluctantly admits that Caswell county had never been distinguished for its great men but declares that it could point to a large number “entitled to the rank of mediocrity, and some above it,” and he finds much satisfaction in the fact that these were all natives for he proudly tells us “we have no spreeing Irishmen, revolutionizing Frenchmen, or speculating Scotchmen among us.”

Passing now from these two counties to the State as a whole, we find that conditions were the same everywhere. In 1810 a writer in the *Raleigh Star* could enumerate only twenty academies and grammar schools in the State, while the University, after fifteen years of precarious existence, “deserted and frowned upon by the Legislature,” could muster only sixty-five students.<sup>1</sup> Six years later Archibald D. Murphey declared that the elementary education of children in North Carolina was left in a large measure to chance, and that thousands were accordingly growing up in total ignorance of their religious and moral duties.<sup>2</sup> John M. Walker, a member of the General Assembly, warned the Legislature of 1817 not to be “tantalized by the deceptive appearance of progressive education in our State,” for while each county was vying with the others in erecting academies, the great mass of the people were destitute of schools. “It is a melancholy fact,” he declares, “that our schools are lessening in their number and useful-

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1. *Ibid.* I., 73.

2. Report of 1816. Coon: Pub. Ed. in N. C., I. 105-111; Hoyt: Papers of Archibald D. Murphey.

ness."<sup>1</sup> In 1829 Joseph Caldwell, president of the University, declared that North Carolina was three centuries behind the other States in the education of her children, and that a great many people actually boasted of their ignorance of letters.<sup>2</sup> Nine years later the Chairman of the Committee on Education in the State senate said in his report that "in the homes of thousands now in North Carolina are to be found children of all ages from infancy to manhood, who are in the most perfect state of ignorance and vice and who have never been and perhaps never may be able to read the first sentence in the Bible. . . . Those who have mixed much with the people of our State, know that there is an average of nearly one-half in every family of the State who have received no education and who are as yet unprovided with the means of learning even to read and write."<sup>3</sup>

After hearing these statements of men in positions to know the facts you will not be surprised to learn that a careful estimate, made in 1838, placed the number of illiterate children in the State between five and fifteen years of age, at 120,000;<sup>4</sup> and that the United States Census of 1840 revealed to the world the humiliating fact that, after more than sixty years of independence, one-third of the adult white population of North Carolina could neither read nor write.

Were I to bring this survey of educational condi-

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1. Report of 1817. Coon: Pub. Ed. in N. C., I., 147-64.

2. Coon: Pub. Ed. in N. C., I., 434.

3. William W. Cherry's report. Coon: Pub. Ed. in N. C., II., 857-65.

4. By Rev. A. J. Leavenworth, of Charlotte. Coon: Pub. Ed. in N. C., II., 813.

tions in North Carolina to a close at this point, I should leave the most important part of my story untold, be guilty of neglecting my duty to you, and do a grave injustice to the State which we all love. I would not have you suppose that during all these years no statesman could be found in North Carolina with the wisdom, the courage and the patriotism to protest against these conditions. Indeed, no great movement in all our history, not even the epochal period of Revolution which changed the currents of the political life of the State, nor the epic period of Civil War which struck deep down under the roots of her social life, brought to the forefront a group of statesmen of greater abilities, of more farseeing vision, of more determined purpose, or of more splendid patriotism than did the movement for the educational uplift of the people of this State which resulted in the organization here in North Carolina of the first complete public school system in the South. In this group are to be found every governor from 1802 to 1840, save one, besides Archibald D. Murphey, Bartlett Yancey, Joseph Caldwell and numerous others only less famous. The splendid victory which these men won can not be properly appreciated unless we get some idea of the obstacles against which they had to struggle. Besides the general ignorance of the people, which I have already sufficiently discussed, there may be mentioned two very serious obstacles. First, the low educational ideals of the time; second, the indifference of the Legislature.

There is perhaps no better standard by which to judge a people's educational ideals than the estimate in which they hold the teacher and the teaching profession. In the following graphic description of the



qualifications demanded in 1832 of a school teacher, Joseph Caldwell gives us a vivid impression of the educational ideals prevalent at that time. Says he:

“In our present mode of popular education, we act upon the principle that school-keeping is a business to which scarcely any one but an idiot is incompetent, if he only knows reading, writing and arithmetic. . . . Is a man constitutionally and habitually indolent, a burden upon all from whom he can extract a support? Then there is one way of shaking him off, let us make him a schoolmaster. . . . Has any man wasted all his property, or ended in debt by indiscretion and misconduct? The business of school keeping stands wide open for his reception, and here he sinks to the bottom, for want of capacity to support himself. Has any one ruined himself, and done all he could to corrupt others, by dissipation, drinking, seduction, and a course of irregularities? Nay, has he returned from a prison after an ignominious atonement for some violation of the laws? He is destitute of character and can not be trusted, but presently he opens a school and the children are seen flocking to it, for if he is willing to act in that capacity, we shall all admit that as he can read and write, and cypher to the square root, he will make an excellent schoolmaster. . . . Is it strange that in the eyes of thousands, when education is spoken of, you can read a most distinct expression that it is a poor and valueless thing? . . . Let any profession be wholly consigned to occupants so wretchedly destitute of every qualification in skill and principle, let it be known to the people only in such defective and degrading forms, and how can it be otherwise than

contemptible, and all that is connected with it of little or no worth?"<sup>1</sup>

Such, indeed, seems to have been the opinion of the General Assembly of North Carolina. Although the Constitution contained a requirement that "a school or schools shall be established by the Legislature, for the convenient instruction of youth, with such salaries to the masters, paid by the public, as may enable them to instruct at low prices," although governor after governor urged the Legislature to obey this command, although numerous bills with this object in view were supported in the General Assembly by powerful argument and eloquence, nevertheless, for more than half a century, in spite of constitutional obligations, in spite of urgent appeals from a dozen governors, in spite of the cogent logic of senators and representatives of the people, the General Assembly turned a deaf ear to every proposition designed to bring the means of education within reach of the masses.

Many of the governors strongly reproached the Legislature for its indifference to the subject. In 1822 Governor Holmes said: "Our Constitution has made it your duty to encourage and promote every kind of useful learning. Its wise and patriotic framers, . . . ordained it to be their own duty and the duty of their sons, . . . to diffuse learning among the people. . . . I fear, gentlemen, if those venerable fathers were to rise from their tombs, they would reproach us with supineness and neglect."<sup>2</sup> Two years later he apologized for again referring to the subject,

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1. Coon: Pub. Ed. in N. C. II, 860.

2. Ibid, I, 193-94.

saying: "I have harped on it so often (and as often, I presume, have my predecessors) that I now touch the chord with almost hopeless expectations and frigid indifference."<sup>1</sup> In 1835, Governor Swain, in his last message, took a parting shot at the Legislature by declaring that the history of that body for fifty years would exhibit to posterity little more than the annual imposition of taxes, one-half of which was spent on the Legislature itself, and the other half on the train of officers who superintended the machinery of government. "The establishment of schools for the convenient instruction of youth, and the development and improvement of our internal resources . . ." he said, "will seem scarcely to have been regarded as proper objects of legislative concern."<sup>2</sup>

Were these strictures of the executive department on the legislative department just? From 1790 to 1802 not a single measure relating to public education was considered by the Legislature. In 1802 a plan for establishing a State Military School was rejected.<sup>3</sup> In 1803 two bills for the establishment of public academies were killed.<sup>4</sup> During the next eleven years the subject of education was not even considered at all by the Legislature. It was not until 1815 that committees on education were appointed in the two houses.<sup>5</sup> The next year Archibald D. Mur-

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1. *Ibid.*, I., 217.

2. *Ibid.*, II., 712-14.

3. *Ibid.*, I., 32-41.

4. *Ibid.*, I., 44-47.

5. It was a joint "Committee on Seminaries of Learning," composed of Frederick Nash, of Orange, and Simmons J. Baker, of Martin, from the House, and James McKay, of Bladen, from the Senate. House and Senate Journals of 1815.

phrey, chairman of the Senate Committee on Education, submitted a report on the subject, but the only action taken was the appointment of a second committee "to digest a system of public instruction" to be submitted to the next Legislature. In 1817 came Murphey's famous plan for a system of public schools, and at the same session the plan of John M. Walker for the training of teachers; but both were thrust aside without consideration. From 1817 to 1825 numerous bills for providing for the establishment of schools were introduced and promptly buried in the dark pigeon-holes in the archives of the Legislature.<sup>1</sup>

The first substantial victory for education was won in 1825, when Charles A. Hill, of Franklin county, introduced and secured the passage of a bill to set aside certain funds of the State as a permanent school fund, to be called the Literary Fund, the proceeds of which were to be used for the maintenance of public schools. This fund was to be managed by a board composed of the governor, the speakers of the two houses of the General Assembly, the State treasurer and the chief justice, who were officially known as "The President and Directors of the Literary Fund," but were popularly called the Literary Board.<sup>2</sup> After the passage of this bill the Legislature rested from its labors, and ten unfruitful years followed, during which the proceeds of the Literary Fund, instead of being used for schools were taken

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1. These reports, bills and committees are all published in Coon: *Public Education in North Carolina, 1790-1840*.

2. Coon: *Pub. Ed. in N. C., I., 279-82*.

by the Legislature for other purposes.<sup>1</sup> In 1836 Congress distributed to the States the surplus revenues in the United States treasury, a large sum of which North Carolina received, nearly \$1,500,000. Something more than \$1,000,000 of this sum was turned over to the Literary Board, and the Literary Fund, now amounting to more than \$2,000,000 was at last large enough to yield a fair income for schools. In 1839, therefore, the Legislature passed an act dividing the counties into school districts and providing for holding an election in each district on the question of "schools" or "no schools."<sup>2</sup> The friends of schools immediately began an active campaign which resulted in a victory in all but seven counties.<sup>3</sup>

"Thus," as Mr. Charles L. Coon has so forcibly said, "the long agitation was ended. In some form or other North Carolina has maintained public schools during all the time since 1840, except a few years immediately following the Civil War. . . . While the school law of 1839 was not a satisfactory measure, it marked the beginning of a new era. Individualism was now gradually to give way to community spirit; selfishness and intolerance which desired only to be undisturbed must now needs give place to measures devoted to the welfare and uplift of all the people; hatred of taxation for schools must now begin to disappear before the dawning of that wiser policy that no taxation is oppressive which is

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1. Extracts from the Minutes and Reports of the Literary Board are printed in Coon, Pub. Ed. in N. C., I., 345 et seq.
  2. For proceedings of the General Assembly on this measure see Coon: Pub. Ed. in N. C., II., 818 et seq.
  3. Coon: Pub. Ed. in N. C., II., 910-12.

used for giving equal educational opportunities to all."<sup>1</sup>

Closely allied with the educational problem of this period, was the problem of internal improvements. The opponents of public schools argued with great effect that the population of the State was too sparse and her wealth too small to support successfully a system of public schools. There was, of course, much force in this argument, but the advocates of schools met it very effectually by replying that it was this very policy that had kept the population sparse by discouraging immigration and by forcing thousands of native North Carolinians to seek in other regions opportunities denied them at home; that it had kept the State poor by checking improvements in agriculture, by prohibiting the establishment of manufactures, and by preventing the development of commerce. Thus these two questions, schools and internal improvements, were intimately linked together in the legislative program of the progressive men of that epoch who saw clearly enough that they would fall or triumph together.

The problem of internal improvements was largely a problem of transportation. It was useless for farmers to produce more than they needed for their own consumption unless they could transport their surplus to market. It was impracticable to establish manufacturing enterprises unless the products of the factory could be distributed to the consumers. It was impossible to develop commerce without facilities for trade. Thus the whole question settled itself

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1. Pub. Ed. in N. C., Editor's Introduction I., XLVI.

into a question of transportation, and at that day but two means of transportation were known—by wagons over public roads and by water.

To carry on any considerable commerce over the public roads of that day was an impossibility. No improvement in road-building, or in the up-keep of roads had been made since colonial times, and the public roads of 1840 were as primitive as those of 1740. During the winter season as a rule they were impassable for heavily loaded vehicles, and at all times transportation over them was difficult, dangerous and expensive. The immense distances to be covered, the difficulties of construction through vast stretches of wilderness, the sparsity of population along their routes, made the expense of surveying, constructing and up-keeping of roads heavier than the average community could bear, and the only possible hope for the building of a system of public highways at all adequate was through the agency of the State.

The same question of expense confronted the State in the working out of an adequate system of water transportation. There are but four rivers in North Carolina capable of any considerable navigation—the Roanoke, the Tar, the Neuse, and the Cape Fear. Of these only the Cape Fear flows directly into the ocean, and at the mouth of that river the inlet was too shallow to admit any but the smallest sea-going vessels. The inlets through which passage from the ocean could be made to the other rivers, could become important for trade only in connection with artificial waterways. The other rivers of the State were so shallow and rapid that their usefulness for

purposes of navigation was very limited. Water transportation could be provided for western North Carolina, therefore, only through a system of canals. But to keep open the inlets of the east, to construct and maintain a system of canals for the west, to widen and deepen the channels of the rivers of both sections, were immensely expensive tasks, far beyond the ability of individuals, or even of private corporations, and if such a system were ever to be constructed for North Carolina, it was evident to all that it must be done by the State.

The friends of internal improvements, therefore, looked to the State for the construction of turnpikes, the digging of canals, the deepening of rivers and harbors, and the opening of inlets, and they urged the Legislature to make appropriations for these purposes. In 1791 Governor Martin said: "The internal navigation of the State still requires Legislative assistance, our sister States are emulous with each other in opening their rivers and cutting canals, while attempts of this kind are but feebly aided among us."<sup>1</sup> In 1806 Governor Alexander declared: "The natural situation of the State being unfavorable to commerce, it is of the greatest importance that liberal provision should be made for the internal improvements, particularly for the establishment of good public roads, and the extension of our inland navigation."<sup>2</sup> Other governors made similar recommendations which were disregarded; friends of internal improvements presented memorials and petitions which were unheeded; senators and representatives

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1. Journal of House of Commons, 1791-92, 4.

2. House Journal of 1806, 5.



introduced bills which were promptly rejected, and the history of the agitation for schools was re-enacted. Public roads remained impassable, canals uncut, rivers unnavigable, and inlets unopened. The waters of our streams continued to flow on to the sea unhampered by mills and factories, agriculture remained at a standstill, commerce languished, and our towns remained villages while the tide of emigration flowed steadily from North Carolina into the vast unoccupied regions of the new Northwest and the new Southwest.

Perhaps there are among you some who think my picture too sombre. In 1815 a committee of the State Senate declared in its report that "agriculture is at a standstill, . . . and whilst the people, whom we have sent to work the soil of other states and territories have raised the price of their lands from two to fourfold, the price of ours has remained stationary."<sup>1</sup> Fifteen years passed, and conditions seem to have become steadily worse. Remonstrating with the Legislature for its indifference to schools and internal improvements, Governor Owen, in 1830, declared that it was time "to raise a protesting voice against a species of economy which has so long kept the poor in ignorance and the State in poverty."<sup>2</sup> In 1835, Governor Swain called attention to the fact that "there is not a single work of internal improvement in progress, and no fund that deserves the name provided for the future development of our resources," and declared that "it ceases to be a matter of surprise that even our younger sisters . . . should

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1. Senate Journal of 1815, 22.

2. Pub. Ed. in N. C., I., 459.

outstrip us in the generous contest for physical and intellectual improvement.”<sup>1</sup> The next year the citizens of Fayetteville, in a memorial to the Legislature, said “they have year after year witnessed with pain and mortification the depressed condition which each section of our State presents, when compared with that of her sisters of our happy Union, that while happiness, contentment and prosperity are manifest throughout their borders discontent, decay and ruin are strongly delineated within our own.”<sup>2</sup> Governor Dudley said in his inaugural address before the Legislature, January 1, 1837: “As a State, we stand fifth in population, first in climate, equal in soils, minerals and ores, with superior advantages for manufacturing and with a hardy, industrious and economical people. Yet, with such unequalled natural facilities, we are actually least in the scale of relative wealth and enterprise, and our condition daily becomes worse—lands depressed in price, fallow and deserted—manufacturing advantages unimproved—our stores of mineral wealth undisturbed, and our colleges and schools languishing from neglect.”<sup>3</sup>

There is ample evidence that these comments on conditions in the State were not the pessimistic lamentations of men disappointed in their favorite schemes for the salvation of the race.

A traveller from Weldon to Raleigh, as late as 1853, records the following experience: “The road was as bad as anything, under the name of a road,

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1. *Ibid.*, I., 713.

2. *Ibid.*, I., 795.

3. *Ibid.*, I. 803.

can be conceived to be. Whenever the adjoining swamps, fallen trees, stumps, and plantation fences would admit of it, the coach was driven, with a great deal of dexterity, out of the road. When the wheels sunk in the mud, below the hubs, we were sometimes requested to get out and walk. An upset seemed every moment inevitable. At length, it came," to the great peril of the limbs and necks of the passengers.<sup>1</sup> In 1842, Governor Morehead, in his message to the Legislature, declared: "From personal observations, I have found the roads leading from Raleigh westward . . . decidedly the worst in the State"; and he further asserted that the cost to the farmer of transporting his cotton, corn and wheat over these roads was so great "that it takes one half [the crop] to transport the other to market."<sup>2</sup> This observation is borne out by the traveller whom I have already quoted, who records that a farmer near Raleigh told him that "no money was to be got by raising corn, and very few farmers here 'made' any more than they needed for their own force," because, "it cost too much to get it to market."<sup>3</sup> It is not surprising that under these conditions the State was rapidly being drained of her most enterprising citizens. In 1815 a committee of the State Senate estimated that during the preceding twenty-five years more than 200,000 people had moved from North Carolina into Tennessee, Ohio and Alabama, declaring that "it is mortifying to witness the fact that thousands of our wealthy

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1. Olmstead, Frederick Law: *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States, 1853-1854*, I. 348.
  2. *House Journal of 1842*, 409.
  3. Olmstead: I., 358.

and respectable citizens are annually moving to the West in quest of that wealth which a rich soil and commodious navigation never fail to create in a free State; and that thousands of our poorer citizens follow them, being literally driven away by the prospect of poverty."<sup>1</sup> Twenty years later and the flow of population from the State had not abated. "The tide of emigration," wrote Governor Swain, in 1835, "continues to flow in a copious and steady current to the new States and Territories of the West."<sup>2</sup> Guess work, do you call it? Unfortunately the observations of these men are too well borne out by evidence that cannot be impeached. The United States Census of 1840 showed that the population of North Carolina was stationary. From 1830 to 1840 thirty-two of the sixty-eight counties in the State lost in population, while the increase in the State as a whole was less than 2.5 per cent. There is no question as to what had become of her people. The Census of 1850 showed that one-third of all the natives of North Carolina then residing in the United States were living in other states than North Carolina; that is to say, North Carolina's indifference to education, neglect of her resources, hatred of taxation, and general backwardness in the race for intelligence and wealth, had driven from her borders more than 400,000 of her strongest, most vigorous sons and daughters who had gone to build up the great states of the Middlewest and of the Southwest.

The explanation of the backwardness of North Carolina during this first half-century of her career

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1. Senate Journal, 22.  
2. House Journal, 99.

as an independent State is to be found chiefly in the political conditions of that period. North Carolina entered upon her career of independence handicapped by a Constitution that placed in control of her destinies the least progressive section of the State and the most conservative element of her population. So long as all her energies were consumed with the struggle for independence no efforts could be made to develop the resources of the State; but as soon as independence was secured, a stable government organized, and peace assured, progressive men, as we have seen, began to bring forward schemes for the material, intellectual and social development of the State, when to their consternation they found themselves blocked in every particular by the undemocratic features of the Constitution. To understand the difficulties they had to encounter and overcome it is essential that we should understand some of these undemocratic features of the government.

The government established under the Constitution of 1776 while a representative democracy in form was an oligarchy in fact and in practice. In fixing the basis of representation in the General Assembly, the Constitution paid no attention to population, that fundamental principle in all democracies, but gave every county, regardless of its size, wealth, or population, two members of the House of Commons and one member of the State Senate. In 1790, for instance, Brunswick county with only 3,000 people sent the same number of representatives to the Legislature, had the same voice in making the laws of the State, and cast the same vote for governor and other State officials as Rowan county which had five times as many people. Even more undemo-

cratic than this were the limitations placed on suffrage and office-holding. No man could vote for a State senator unless he owned as much as fifty acres of land; or be a member of the House of Commons unless he owned as much as one hundred acres, or of the State Senate unless he owned as much as three hundred acres; and no person could be governor unless he owned land worth above £1000—a sum equal to ten times that amount in our own day. Moreover the people had no voice in the selection of their State officials. The governor, the councillors of State, and other executive officials, and the judges were all chosen by the General Assembly. Thus only landowners could vote for the highest officers of the State, only landowners could participate in making laws, only landowners could hold the great executive offices. The government was absolutely under control of a small majority of the people, composed of the landed, slave-holding aristocracy of the East.

Undemocratic as this government was in form it was even more so in spirit. Inasmuch as all State officials were elected by the Legislature, and the Legislature was controlled by the landed aristocracy, property not men controlled the government. The two most important kinds of property in the State at that time were land and slaves. The class which owned this property was ultra conservative. Living on their large plantations, supported by the labor of their slaves, satisfied with their easy, patriarchal existence, these aristocratic planters assumed a patronizing attitude toward the great mass of those whom they were pleased to call the "common people," encouraged these "common people" to depend upon their bounty for everything above the absolute neces-

sities of life, and strenuously opposed granting to them more political power, or lending the assistance of the State to the improvement of their material, intellectual and social conditions. The planter was amply able to employ governesses and private tutors for his own children, to send his own sons to the State University, and he could see no good reason why he should be required to pay taxes to educate the children of his poorer neighbors. The stronghold of the planter was in the East. There cotton was king, and so long as the broad deep rivers of that section afforded this tyrant an outlet to the markets of the world, he concerned himself but little with the welfare of the rest of the State. The planters of that section saw no good reason why they, blessed with superior natural advantages for trade, should burden themselves with the expense of building roads and digging canals that would bring the produce of other sections into competition with their own.

Schools and internal improvements were simply euphemisms for taxation. Taxation was an evil. Therefore schools and internal improvements were evils and must be avoided. So ran the planter's logic, and so long as he and his class retained control of the State government this logic was rigidly applied to public affairs. In 1790 the total annual expenditures of the State government were only \$41,000, and fifty years later they had not more than doubled. Thus schools and internal improvements were sacrificed to the planter's hatred of taxation, while the people remained ignorant and poor.

In the western part of the State, conditions were very different. The great body of the people of that section were small farmers, who for the most part

tilled the soil themselves unaided by slave labor. Cotton played a comparatively insignificant part in their economic system. Their rivers and streams were shallow, narrow and rapid, better fitted for manufacturing than for navigation. But successful manufacturing enterprises were out of the question so long as there were no facilities for transporting manufactured products to market. The building of good roads, the construction of public turnpikes, the digging of canals, and, a few years later, the construction of railroads, therefore, became important features of the policy of that section. But when the West attempted to carry that policy into execution it found itself blocked by the interests of the East. For reasons, too, which I pointed out two years ago in my lecture on the Scotch-Irish, the social life of the West was more democratic than that of the East. Out of this democratic social system arose the first demand for a system of public schools in North Carolina. But here again the West found itself thwarted by the East which held secure in its own hands the reigns of government. The West accordingly came to the conclusion that before it could carry out its program of internal improvements and public schools, it must first wage and win a contest for political reform.

When the western leaders came to study political conditions they developed a rather remarkable situation. In 1776, when the Constitution was adopted, the East contained a majority both of the counties and of the population of the State. Consequently the inconsistency of the provision relative to representation in the General Assembly was not clearly understood. But after the Revolution the West grew



much more rapidly in population than the East. In 1790, when the first Federal Census was taken, 62 per cent. of the people of North Carolina lived east of the western boundary of Wake county; fifty years later only 49.5 per cent. lived east of that line. In other words while the population of the East had increased only 53 per cent. during this half-century, that of the West had increased 156 per cent. The West naturally expected that as the center of population moved westward, and the vast unoccupied areas of that section filled up with people, new counties, each entitled to three members of the Legislature, would be created for their convenience; and that the West would ultimately, as it was entitled to do, gain control of the State government. But the East saw the danger to its supremacy and prepared to combat it by preventing as far as possible the erection of new counties in the West.

Frequently in order to win success, the West resorted to the expedient of selecting for proposed new counties the names of popular eastern leaders in the hope of securing the support of their friends and admirers in that section. Thus Ashe county was named in honor of Samuel Ashe of New Hanover, Buncombe in honor of Colonel Edward Buncombe of Tyrrell, Cabarrus in honor of Stephen Cabarrus of Chowan, Haywood in honor of John Haywood of Edgecombe, Iredell in honor of James Iredell of Chowan and Macon in honor of Nathaniel Macon of Warren. When finally forced to establish new counties in the West, the East undertook to off-set them by the creation of new counties in the East and thus to continue its hold on the government. For instance, in 1777 Burke county was given to the West,

but off-set by Camden in the East; in 1779 Lincoln was given to the West, but off-set by Jones in the East; in 1791 Buncombe was given to the West, but off-set by Lenior in the East; in 1799, Ashe was given to the West, but off-set by Greene in the East; and in 1808 Haywood was given to the West, but off-set by Columbus in the East. Sometimes when it was impossible to prevent the creation of a new western county at a time when the East had no new county ready, a movement was immediately started in the East which resulted in the erection of a new eastern county within the next two or three years. Thus Rockingham created for the West in 1785 was off-set by Robeson in the East in 1786.

The result was that while the population of the West soon came to out-number that of the East, yet the East retained its control of the State government. In 1830, for instance, there were sixty-four counties in the State. Thirty-six of these were east of Raleigh. These thirty-six contained only forty-one per cent. of the voting population of the State, yet they sent to the General Assembly fifty-eight per cent. of its members. By reason of the property qualifications for suffrage which the Constitution imposed, the voting population of these eastern counties was only 8.7 per cent. of the total white population of the State; nevertheless this 8.7 per cent. elected a majority of the members of the Legislature by whom the laws were enacted, the governor and other State officials were chosen, and they controlled the State government in all its branches. How fully this control was exercised a few illustrations will show. Fifty-nine years elapsed from the inauguration of Richard Caswell in 1777, the first governor

under the Constitution of 1776, to the retirement of Richard Dobbs Spaight, in 1836, the last governor elected under that Constitution. During these fifty-nine years there were twenty-four governors elected; six of this number were from western counties and served a total of fifteen years, eighteen were from eastern counties and served a total of forty-four years. There were elected during this period 428 councillors of State; of these, there were twenty-four whose residences I have not yet been able to ascertain. Of the other 404 there were 124 western men, and 280 eastern men. Of the thirty-five other State officials chosen by the Legislature during this period, ten came from the West, twenty-five from the East. In the two Houses of the General Assembly itself there were eighteen different speakers of the Senate, of whom six were western, and twelve eastern men; there were thirty-two speakers of the House of Commons, of whom twelve were western, twenty eastern men. From 1789 to 1836 the Legislature elected thirteen United States Senators, five from the West, eight from the East.<sup>1</sup>

The West, therefore, finding both its material interest and its political destiny involved in the triumph of democratic ideals, early began an agitation for amendments to the Constitution so as to make population the basis of representation in the General Assembly, to give to the people directly the election of their governor, and in other respects to make the government democratic in spirit and in practice as well as in form. A long and bitter struggle followed,

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1. Connor, R. D. W. (ed): North Carolina Manual, 1913, 417-1022.

lasting the better part of a half-century, before the West achieved its victory. In 1834 the Legislature, no longer able to resist the tremendous pressure of an aroused public opinion, passed an Act submitting to a vote of the people the question of calling a Convention to amend the Constitution. The election resulted in a victory for the Convention which met in Raleigh June 4, 1835. No abler body of men ever assembled in North Carolina, nor did any body of men in this State ever have graver or more important problems to discuss and solve. As a rule they were in sympathy with the progressive program of the West, and they adopted amendments to the Constitution which went a long way toward making the State government a real democracy. The most important of these amendments made population the basis of representation in the House of Commons, and property the basis of representation in the Senate, and took the election of governor away from the Legislature and gave it to the people.

The influence of these changes on the political, industrial and educational life of the State can not be easily overestimated. They ushered in an era of progress that within the next quarter-century raised North Carolina from the lowest to the highest rank among the slave-holding states of the South in all those things that make for the material, intellectual and social uplift of the people. To this era belong the erection of the present State Capitol, the building of the North Carolina Railroad, the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad, the beginning of the Western North Carolina Railroad, the organization of the North Carolina Agricultural Society, the erection of the first hospital for the insane, the founding of the

State School for the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind, the establishment of a system of public schools, the expansion of the University from a local high school with ninety students into a real college whose five hundred students represented every state from the Potomac to the Gulf of Mexico, and many other progressive measures that lie at the very foundation of the present prosperity, honor and glory of the State.<sup>1</sup>

In the four lectures by which this one is to be followed it is my purpose to present to you the careers of the men who were chiefly responsible for these wonderful changes in the policy of North Carolina; to discuss the statesmanship of Archibald D. Murphey, leader of the long agitation for schools and internal improvements; of David L. Swain, to whose tact and wisdom the West chiefly owed its victory of 1835; of Calvin H. Wiley, whose skill as an organizer made the public school law of 1839 effective; and of John M. Morehead, the architect and builder of the great transportation systems upon which the prosperity of the State at this day is dependent, and will be dependent for all time to come. This is a group of constructive statesmen whose statesmanship is an instructive subject for study, whose achievements lie at the foundations of our social and economic life of today, and whose characters are an honor to our Commonwealth.

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1. For historical sketches of the State Capitol, the railroads mentioned, and the State's charitable and educational institutions see North Carolina Manual, 1913, 127-189.

## II

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# Archibald DeBow Murphey<sup>1</sup>

It was the misfortune of Archibald D. Murphey, to whose career I now invite your attention, to have been sent into the world a hundred years before his time. His policies rejected by the nineteenth century have been accepted by the twentieth, and his dreams of 1814 have become the realities of 1914. He is to be ranked, therefore, not so much as one of the great builders of the State, but rather as the chief among her prophets. His was the voice of one crying in the wilderness showing his people the way to a material prosperity, an intellectual awakening, and a moral greatness which he discerned with unclouded vision, but was himself destined never to see. His was the task of enlightening his people as to their wonderful opportunities, of arousing them from the lethargy of their indifference and self-depreciation, of inspiring them with confidence in themselves and in their country, of awakening their pride and kindling the fires of their ambition. To the accomplishment of this task, it is no exaggeration to

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1. See also Graham, W. A.: *Memoir of Archibald D. Murphey*, U. N. C. Magazine, Vol. III. No. 1; reprinted in *Peele's Lives of Distinguished North Carolinians* and in *Hoyt's Papers of Archibald D. Murphey*; Hoyt, W. Henry: *Archibald D. Murphey, Biographical Hist. of N. C.*, Vol. IV. pp. 340-49.

say that he brought a more thorough comprehension of the natural resources of the State, a clearer insight into her possibilities for development, a better understanding of her conditions and needs, a bolder and more philosophic grasp of the policies necessary for her relief, a more abiding confidence in the greatness of her destiny, than any other man of his generation.

Born too late to bear any part in the struggle for independence, or to have a share in the organization of the State government, or to participate in the great work of laying the foundation of the Federal Union, Murphey was just old enough to remember something of those struggles and to know personally some of the eminent patriots who participated in them. Lamenting the fortune which denied him a share in those mighty events, but inspired by his contact with the great men who wrought them, he was fired with an ambition to render service to the State that would give his name a place in history along with those of Harvey and Harnett, of Caswell and Davie, of Johnston and Iredell, and their contemporaries of the preceding generation. The work of organization had been completed when Murphey reached manhood, but the work of development was yet to be done, and in this he saw the field in which he could serve the State and gratify his ambitions.

The simple facts of Murphey's life need not detain us long. He was born in Caswell county in 1777, was prepared for college at David Caldwell's famous academy in Guilford county, entered the University of North Carolina in 1796, and was graduated with the highest distinction in 1799. The next two years he served as a member of the faculty of the Univer-

sity. In 1802 he was admitted to the bar, settled at Hillsboro, and rose rapidly to a position of leadership. Among his rivals at the bar were Thomas Ruffin and Frederick Nash, later chief justices of North Carolina; Willie P. Mangum and George E. Badger, distinguished colleagues of Clay, Calhoun and Webster in the Senate of the United States; John M. Morehead, afterwards governor of North Carolina; Francis L. Hawks, in later years renowned as the most eloquent orator of his day in the American pulpit, and others no less able and scarcely less eminent. From 1812 to 1818, inclusive, Murphey represented Orange county in the State Senate; and in 1818 was elected Judge of the Superior Court. After three years of judicial service he resigned in order to repair his private fortune, once considerable, but now threatened with ruin. Failing in these efforts, overwhelmed with financial obligations, broken in body by illness and in spirit by the harshness of his creditors, he passed the last dozen years of his life in disease and poverty, dying at Hillsboro, February 1, 1832, "his ambitions unrealized, his labors unappreciated."

"In many attributes of a statesman and philosopher," says Governor Graham, "he excelled all his contemporaries in the State, and in every department of exertion to which his mind was applied he had few equals or seconds. As an advocate at the bar, a judge on the bench, . . . a legislator of comprehensive intelligence, enterprise and patriotism, a literary man of classic taste, attainments and style in composition, his fame is a source of just pride to his friends and country." Of Murphey as an advocate, and as a judge, Governor Graham says:



“He had a Quaker-like plainness of aspect, a scrupulous cleanness and neatness in an equally plain attire, an habitual politeness, and a subdued simplicity of manner which at once won his way to the hearts of juries, while no Greek dialectician had a more ready and refined ingenuity or was more fertile in every resource of forensic gladiatorship. His manner of speech was never declamatory or in any sense boisterous, but in the style of earnest and emphatic conversation; so simple and apparently undesigning that he seemed to the jury to be but interpreting their thoughts rather than enunciating his own, yet with a correctness and elegance of diction which no severity of criticism could improve. . . . In his office as a judge he well sustained his reputation for learning and ability which had been so well established at the bar, and attracted the admiration of the profession and the people by the courtesy, patience, dignity and justice, which characterized his administration of the law.”

The same qualities of mind, the same manner of dealing with men that distinguished Murphey as an advocate and as a judge distinguished him also as a legislator. He brought to his duties as a legislator the same remarkable powers of elucidation, the same persuasive manner of speaking, the same courtesy, patience and fairness in his intercourse with his associates in the halls of legislation that marked him at the bar and on the bench.

It is with Murphey's career as a legislator that we are chiefly concerned. This career embraced six consecutive terms in the State Senate from 1812 to 1818. His first political utterance, an open letter addressed to the foreman of the Grand Jury of Orange County

in 1812 announcing his candidacy, is not without significance. Says he:

"I have no peculiar claims to the public favour above others, either upon the score of talents, moral worth or public services. . . . If violence of party spirit be a recommendation, as many seem to think, I have nothing to offer upon this score. Having long since become convinced of the evil consequences flowing from party dissention, it has been my endeavour, as far as my little influence extended, to conciliate rather than irritate parties; to think and speak charitably of public as well as private characters, believing that an enlarged charity is as much a virtue in a politician as in a Christian. Hence I have not been in the habit of attributing to either political party, exclusive virtue or exclusive patriotism; of believing one was always right and the other always wrong. . . . To surrender our judgment in political matters . . . (is) an act unworthy of the high prerogative of a freeman, . . . and although I have always belonged to the Republican party, if elected to a seat in the Senate, I shall endeavour to serve the country and not a party."<sup>1</sup>

These phrases sounded good as campaign material, but they are not the significant things about this letter. The significant features of the letter can not be quoted because they were the omissions, not the statements included. Although Murphey fully states his attitude toward the national issues then agitating the country, with which as a State legislator he would have nothing to do; and al-

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1. Hoyt: Papers of Archibald D. Murphey. Hereafter cited simply Hoyt. References to volume and page cannot be given because the work is still in press.

though he was soon to conceive and formulate the most comprehensive program of state policies ever proposed by any individual in our history, nevertheless in this his political salutatory, he did not so much as pay the respect of a passing reference to State policies. The truth is there was no such thing as a State policy in North Carolina until Murphey entered public life and focused public attention upon his program of internal improvements and public education; and it is this program that gives him his distinctive place in our history and justifies Governor Graham's emphatic statement that "he inaugurated a new era in the public policy of the State."

Murphey's public career began at the opening of our second war with England and just before the general world-peace that followed the battle of Waterloo and the overthrow of Napoleon. For the first time in more than a generation the nations of the world paused in their career of war to enjoy a breathing spell of peace, to take an inventory of their conditions, and to apply to the works of construction some of that energy and ability which they had been so long devoting to the works of destruction. Throughout Europe and America there followed an outburst of industrial activity which resulted, during the next half-century, in "a greater advance in all the useful arts and diffusion of the comforts of life among mankind than in any five preceding centuries." The enthusiasm which the unexpected success of American arms in the war against England had aroused in this country, as Murphey wrote, "gave admittance to liberal ideas," and several of the states promptly took advantage of the op-

portunity to initiate systems of internal improvements and general industrial activities. Fully appreciating the conditions throughout the world and eager that North Carolina should share in the general forward movement incident to universal peace, Murphey, as Governor Graham says, "applied all the energies of his intrepid and well furnished mind to the task of devising how his native State should most profit in this universal calm, confer the greatest good on the greatest number of her people, and resume her proper rank in the Union of which she was a member."

As a member of the State Senate he conceived those policies and made those wonderful reports that entitle him to first place among the North Carolina statesmen of his generation. Says Governor Graham: "He inaugurated a new era in the public policy of the State and for many years exerted a greater influence in her counsels than any other citizen. . . . Whether these [his] measures failed from error in their conception or timidity in his contemporaries to meet and boldly sustain them, the historian must pronounce that his reports and other writings in regard to them are the noblest monuments of philosophic statesmanship to be found in our public archives since the days of the Revolution." There is no exaggeration in this statement, and I am almost tempted to say that they are as true in 1914 as they were in 1860 when they were written. Murphey's policies were set forth with wonderful grasp of his subjects and in marvelous detail, in his several reports as Chairman of the Committee on Inland Navigation in the Senate and as Chairman of the State Board of Internal Improvements; in his Me-

moir of 1819 on Internal Improvements; and in his still more wonderful reports of 1816 and 1817 on education. The mainspring of his statesmanship is to be found in the following sentence from his Report of 1816 on Inland Navigation :

“The true foundations of national prosperity and national glory, must be laid in a liberal system of Internal Improvements and of Public Education; in a system which shall give encouragement to the cultivation of the soil; which shall give force to the faculties of the mind, and establish over the heart the empire of a sound morality.”<sup>1</sup>

Murphey first brought forward his program of internal improvements as a comprehensive project of State activity in the Legislature of 1815. The Governor in his annual message called attention, though in a brief and timid way, to the importance of the subject, and Murphey, taking advantage of the opening thus offered, promptly offered and secured the adoption of a resolution, “That it is expedient to provide more efficiently for the improvement of the inland navigation of the State; and that it be referred to a joint select committee of both houses to report upon this subject.” Murphey was made chairman of the committee. His enthusiasm, his knowledge of the subject, his facility for expressing his ideas in lucid and forceful style, made him easily its master-spirit. The report which he wrote and the committee adopted projected the subject into the political consciousness of the State as a living issue. In this report he declared :

“The time has come when it behooves the Legisla-

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1. Hoyt. See also Journals of the Legislature of 1816.

ture of North Carolina to provide efficiently for the improvement of the inland navigation of the State. To delay this provision, is to postpone that national wealth, respectability and importance which follow only in the train of great internal improvements. . . . At this day, . . . no doubt can be entertained as to the great importance of directing both the wealth and attention of the government to objects of internal improvement. It is real economy to expend the public money upon these objects. The blessings of the government are thereby brought home to every man's door—the comforts, the conveniences of life are thereby increased—the public labor is rewarded, and the wealth of the State keeps pace with the wealth of its citizens. It is time for North Carolina to enter upon this career of prosperity—to take effectual steps to develop her territorial resources, and to enlarge them by all means which the science of political economy points out. . . .

“Your committee can see no reason why this great work should be any longer delayed: it is a duty which the members of the Legislature owe to the State, to themselves, their children, and to future generations, to delay it no longer. Upon this subject let party spirit be hushed into silence; and uniting together into one feeling for North Carolina, let us all aspire to the honor of laying the foundations of her glory and her prosperity.”<sup>1</sup>

This report was the foundation upon which he afterwards built his program of internal improvements, which during the next half-dozen years he worked out to the minutest detail.

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1. Hoyt. Journal of 1815.

Three grand objects he had in view. These were: to stop the flow of population away from North Carolina; to increase the wealth of the State; and to free her from her economic dependence on Virginia and South Carolina.

Writing of the first of these three objects in his report of 1815, he said:

“With an extent of territory sufficient to maintain more than ten millions of inhabitants, . . . we can only boast of a population something less than six hundred thousand; and it is but too obvious that this population, under the present state of things, already approaches its maximum. Within twenty-five years past, more than two hundred thousand of our inhabitants have removed to the waters of the Ohio, Tennessee, and Mobile; and it is mortifying to witness the fact that thousands of our wealthy and respectable citizens are annually moving to the west in quest of that wealth which a rich soil and commodious navigation never fail to create in a free State; and that thousands of our poorer citizens follow them being literally driven away by the prospect of poverty. . . . . If we take into view the inducements which those improvements would hold out to our citizens to remain amongst us, we might well calculate, that at the end of twenty years from this time, our population would amount to 1,500,000.”

The accuracy of this calculation is remarkable. In 1850, the first year in which the United States Census Report took note of interstate migrations, thirty-one per cent. of the natives of North Carolina then resident in the United States were living in other states; that is to say, if North Carolina had

been able, as Murphey wished her to do, to retain within her own borders, those of her sons and daughters who had gone to other regions, they with their children, would have given her a population of more than one and a half millions.

Of the increase in the wealth of the State, the second result that he anticipated from his policies, Murphey said:

“It would certainly not be improper to say, that within five years after this improvement shall have been made, the value of all the lands in the State will be doubled, and the productions of our agriculture increased threefold. Taking the value of our land at \$53,506,519, (the amount of the late assessment under the act of Congress), at the end of those five years we might safely estimate the value at \$107,000,000. And taking the annual productions of our agriculture at \$30,000,000, which is certainly below the present amount, at the end of those five years, we might estimate their value at \$90,000,000. In this estimate of national prosperity should also be considered the comforts and conveniences of life which would be brought to the door of each of our citizens, the steady habits of industry which would be established, and the consequent morality which would follow those habits. And not the least of all, we should notice the abundant revenue which would accrue to the State, thereby affording to the Legislature the means, not only of lessening the public burdens, but of providing effectually for the establishment of schools in every section of the State, and of making ample provisions for the cultivation of the sciences and arts.”

Murphey was at all times sensitive for the honor,



the dignity and the independence of the State, and he spoke out vigorously on more than one occasion about her loss of prestige since the formation of the Union. "It is a mortifying fact," he declared in a debate in the Senate of 1815, "that North Carolina has no character, no pride as a State. We have hitherto bent the neck to the State of Virginia, and marched at her nod in all our political movements." Of the economic effects of the lack of markets within the State he says: "The annual profits made upon our commerce in other states, and which is totally lost to North Carolina, is estimated at half a million dollars."<sup>1</sup> To free the State from this dependence, both political and economic, was a prime object in Murphey's policy. Referring to the growth of markets within the State, which he expected to follow the development of her trade and agriculture, he said:

"The growth of our commercial towns is of peculiar importance to the character of the State. Whilst we continue to send our products to the markets of other states, we shall be destitute of that independence of character which it should be the pride of our citizens to cherish. One species of independence begets another: and having hitherto been dependent upon Virginia and South Carolina for markets for the greatest part of our produce, we have in some measure become dependent upon those states for our opinions and our prejudices. It is the duty of the Legislature to contribute as far as possible to break the spell that binds us to this dependence, and so to change the political orb of North Carolina that she

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1. Hoyt.

shall move as a primary and not a secondary state in the system of the confederacy."

Again, returning to the subject, he argues his point in these telling words:

"Is it not an object to create a commercial city? Does not this concentration of wealth give activity to industry in a thousand forms? Does it not develop the resources of agriculture, perfect the mechanic arts, elicit the faculties of genius and expand the boundaries of science? The State which cannot boast of a great city, ever has been and ever will be held in disrepute; she will never cherish an exalted pride; she will never cherish a generous patriotism. Conscious of inferiority, she will submit to a state of dependence, and suffer the manly virtues to sleep. Thousands of generous souls who could not brook this consciousness of inferiority, have already deserted our soil, and thousands more will follow them, if we seek not to exalt the character of North Carolina."

Prophetic words, these! Words so similar to those which our halls of legislation but recently echoed that we might easily enough imagine them to have been uttered in the General Assembly of 1913, for the failure of North Carolina to execute the plans of Archibald D. Murphey in 1815 left it to the men of our own day to issue that declaration of economic independence of the Virginia cities which we have but recently won.

The leading features of Murphey's program were: first, the improvement of means of transportation in the State; second, the building up of markets within North Carolina by developing commercial centers at advantageous points; and third, the drainage of the

swamps of the East and the reclamation of their lands for agricultural purposes. He proposed to construct a complete system of inland transportation by deepening the inlets and sounds along the coast, by clearing out the channels, building locks and otherwise rendering navigable the principal rivers and their tributaries; by connecting these rivers into three systems by means of canals and good roads; and by building turnpikes into those remote parts of the State which could not be reached by water routes. One system was to be formed by improving the Roanoke and its tributaries and giving them an outlet through Albemarle Sound; another by connecting the Yadkin and Catawba rivers with the Cape Fear with its direct outlet to the ocean; and a third by connecting the waters of the Tar and Neuse rivers, with an outlet through Ocracoke Inlet. These plans, he said, had for their objects: "first, the directing of the whole trade of North Carolina into three channels, each having an outlet in the State, thereby securing the growth of our commercial towns; and secondly, extending the convenience of inland navigation to every part of the State, thereby increasing the value of lands and encouraging industry and enterprise among all classes in the community."<sup>1</sup>

It was, as one of Murphey's biographers has said, a "bold, comprehensive, and well-connected scheme of internal improvements, equal in breadth of conception to the great scheme that De Witt Clinton was then launching in New York." And it was "designed to provide by the best methods then known to science, and by the aid of natural advantages for in-

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1. Ibid.

land navigation enjoyed by no neighboring State, cheap and easy transportation from all sections to the best inlets of the sandy barriers which locked out the commerce of the world, and to build up a home market by the concentration of trade at a few points within the limits of the State suited to the growth of large cities.”<sup>1</sup>

The trouble was that Murphey’s plan was too bold, too comprehensive. No other man of his day in North Carolina had the imagination to conceive a scheme so large, or the vision to foresee its results, while Murphey himself did not possess the practical knowledge of engineering to carry it into execution. For this, therefore, he was compelled to rely upon others who moved within a narrower intellectual range than himself, and his scheme was consequently doomed to failure for the lack of agents of sufficient foresight and intellectual grasp to transform his dreams into realities. Besides this, he had to reckon with sectional interests, prejudices and jealousies. It was necessary, in order to get anything at all done, to conciliate favor by making special appropriations to different sections of the State, and this log-rolling method made systematic planning and execution impossible. Murphey foresaw this danger, as he seems to have foreseen everything else, and warned the Legislature against it, saying in a memorable passage:

“No considerations of local policy, no paltry considerations of expense, should divert our views for one moment from the destiny to which we are aspiring, and to which we shall certainly attain, if we

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1. Hoyt: *Biog. Hist. of N. C.* IV., 340-49.

cease not our efforts. Rising above the influence of little passions, let us devote our labors to the honor and glory of the State in which we live, by establishing and giving effect to a system of policy which shall develop her physical resources, draw forth her moral and intellectual energies, give facilities to her industry, and encouragement to her enterprise. It is only by persevering in a systematic course of elevated policy that the prosperity of the State can be reared up and be made stable. Isolated measures, without plan and without system, have never yet made a State great, nor a people happy. They baffle the efforts of honest industry by often giving to them a wrong direction; they disappoint the expectations of enterprise by their frequent abortion."<sup>1</sup>

But this eloquent appeal fell on deaf ears!

It must not be supposed, however, that Murphey's splendid dreams came to naught. Great results were achieved which we can better appreciate than the men of that day. Numerous navigation companies, in which the State took stock, were chartered, a fund for internal improvements was established, a State board of commissioners of internal improvements created, engineers employed, numerous surveys made, and a vast amount of valuable data was collected of the greatest usefulness to the State. This last, indeed, was one of the chief objects Murphey had in view. Said he:

"It is mortifying to look around and witness the general ignorance which prevails of the resources and character of the State; to see, both in the Legislature and out of it, men of respectable understand-

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1. Hoyt.

ing, almost totally ignorant of our geographical situation, of the state of our population, our finances, our agriculture, our commerce, our soil and our climate," and to enlighten this ignorance he proposed to impose upon the Commissioners of Internal Improvements "the duties of collecting information for the use of the Legislature upon the climate, the soil, the agriculture, the productions and the manufactures of the State; and as far as may be convenient, of each county therein; and from time to time to submit to the Legislature regular series of statistical tables upon these subjects. . . . At this time we are destitute of regular statistical information; and your committee deem it an object worthy of attention to employ intelligent men to collect and arrange such information for the use of the Legislature."<sup>1</sup>

One of the ultimate results of the work done in accordance with this suggestion was the creation of the State Geological Survey.

Governor Graham, an unusually careful and painstaking man, estimated that the \$50,000 expended by the State on Murphey's schemes for internal improvements, "was repaid tenfold in the topographical and statistical information which it elicited and caused to be published, and in the loyal and true North Carolina patriotism aroused by Mr. Murphey's discussion of the subject in the hearts of her people."

Intimately connected with Murphey's program of internal improvements was his program of public education. Indeed, as we have seen, one of his objects in advocating internal improvements was to increase the revenues of the State so as to enable her

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1. *Ibid.*

to support a system of public education and advance the arts and sciences in North Carolina. "That people," he said, "who cultivate the sciences and the arts with most success, acquire a most enviable superiority over others. Learned men by their discoveries and works give a lasting splendor to national character; and such is the enthusiasm of man, that there is not an individual, however humble in life his lot may be, who does not feel proud to belong to a country honored with great men and magnificent institutions."<sup>1</sup>

Murphey's interest in this subject was sharpened by, if it did not originate in his personal difficulties in obtaining an education in North Carolina. These difficulties he described with great vividness in a memorable passage in his oration at the University in 1827.<sup>2</sup> After graphic descriptions of the great lawyers and orators of North Carolina—Davie, Moore, Duffy, Haywood and Stanly—he says:

"Few of the men whom I have named had the advantage of a liberal education; they rose to eminence by the force of their genius and a diligent application to their studies. The number of our literary men has been small, compared with our population; but this is not a matter of surprise, when we look to the condition of the State since the close of the Revolutionary war. When the war ended, the people were in poverty, society in disorder, morals and manners almost prostrate. Order was to be restored to society and energy to the laws, before industry could repair

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1. Report of 1817. Coon: Pub. Ed. in N. C., I., 123-46.

2. Hoyt. Also printed in Peele's *Lives of Distinguished North Carolinians*, 128-47.

the fortunes of the people; schools were to be established for the education of youth, and congregations formed for preaching the gospel, before the public morals could be amended. Time was required to effect these objects; and the most important of them, the education of youth, was the longest neglected. Before this University went into operation, in 1795, there were not more than three schools in the State, in which the rudiments of a classical education could be acquired. The most prominent and useful of these schools was kept by Dr. David Caldwell, of Guilford county. He instituted it shortly after the close of the war, and continued it for more than thirty years. The usefulness of Dr. Caldwell to the literature of North Carolina will never be sufficiently appreciated; but the opportunities of instruction in his schools were very limited. There was no library attached to it; . . . the students had no books on history or miscellaneous literature. There were indeed very few in the State, except in the libraries of lawyers who lived in the commercial towns. I well remember, that after completing my course of studies under Dr. Caldwell, I spent nearly two years without finding any books to read, except some old works on theological subjects. At length, I accidentally met with Voltaire's history of Charles the twelfth of Sweden, an odd volume of Smollett's Roderic Random, and an abridgement of Don Quixote. These books gave me a taste for reading, which I had no opportunity of gratifying until I became a student in this University in the year 1796. Few of Dr. Caldwell's students had better opportunities of getting books than myself; and with these slender opportuni-



ties of instruction, it is not surprising that so few became eminent in the liberal professions."

Murphey's educational program was set forth in two reports to the General Assembly, one in 1816, the other in 1817, and in a bill introduced in the Senate of 1817—embracing as Mr. Coon has said, "the profoundest and most comprehensive educational wisdom ever presented for the consideration of a North Carolina legislature."<sup>1</sup> Before Murphey's report of 1816 nobody had ever suggested that the State should do more than aid in the education of poor children. Murphey's object, as he himself said, was to "frame a system [of education] which will suit the condition of our country and the genius of its government; which will develop the faculties of the mind and improve the good dispositions of the heart; which shall embrace in its views the rich and the poor, the dull and the sprightly." Calling attention to the failure of the efforts of private individuals and institutions to do this work, Murphey continues: Your committee "entertain the fear that no better success will hereafter attend them, until a general system of public education shall be established and enforced by the legislature. This general system must include a gradation of schools, regularly supporting each other, from the one in which the first rudiments of education are taught, to that in which the highest branches of the sciences are cultivated." The subject, however, was one of such magnitude and importance, that more time than the committee had was necessary to work out the details. Therefore,

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1. Both are printed in Coon: Pub. Ed. in N. C., I. 105-111, 123-46.

Murphey concluded the report of 1816 by offering the following resolution:

“Resolved, That the Speakers of the two Houses of the General Assembly appoint three persons, to digest a system of Public Instruction, founded upon the general principles of the foregoing report, and submit the same to the consideration of the next General Assembly.”

This resolution was adopted, but strange to say no record can be found of the appointment of the committee provided for. That such a committee was appointed is evident from the fact that in 1817 John M. Walker, who had represented Warren county in the House of Commons in 1815 and 1816, submitted to the House of Commons a report on education accompanied by a letter to the Speaker in which he stated that he had been appointed in obedience to a joint resolution of the General Assembly at their last session, “a Commissioner, in common with two other gentlemen to digest a plan of Popular Education.”<sup>1</sup> But who the other two members were is not known. It is scarcely probable that Murphey was one of them for if he had been it is certain that his enthusiasm on the subject would have compelled a meeting of the committee and the preparation of a report to the Legislature. Walker’s report of 1817 was not the report of the committee, for he states expressly that “being unable to communicate with those Gent’n on the subject,” he deemed it his duty to submit an individual report. Murphey’s famous report of 1817 was the report of the Senate Committee on Education and does not purport to be

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1. Printed in Coon: Pub. Ed. in N. C., I., 147-64.

the report of the joint committee provided for by his resolution of 1816.

In his report of 1817 Murphey congratulated the Legislature upon "the arrival of a period, when our country, enjoying peace with foreign nations and free from domestic inquietude," could now turn her attention "to improving her physical resources and the moral and intellectual conditions of her citizens. . . . Your committee have entered upon the duties assigned to them with a full conviction of their importance and of the difficulties which attend their discharge, . . . and availing themselves of the light thrown upon the subject by the wisdom of others, they have prepared a system of Public Instruction for N. Carolina which with much deference they beg leave to submit to the consideration of the General Assembly."

Murphey's plan contemplated a complete system of public education. Each county was to be divided into townships with primary schools in each. Above these there were to be ten districts in each of which was to be an academy or high school; and above the high schools, the University—exactly the plan, with variations in details only, which we are now working out in North Carolina. There was also to be a school for the Deaf and Dumb. These schools were to be supported partly by local and partly by State funds. The plan proposed to create a school fund out of certain specified funds of the State from the income of which the State was to contribute her part to the support of the schools. The management of this fund was to be placed under a board of commissioners, with the Governor at their head, corresponding to our present State Board of Education. This board

was to have power to locate schools, fix teachers' qualifications and salaries, appoint school committeemen, prepare plans for the promotion of students from the primary to the secondary schools, and to exercise a general supervision over the whole system. Besides these subjects Murphey discussed in a masterly way courses of study, methods of instruction, discipline and other pedagogical topics, and showed himself perfectly familiar with the great work of Joseph Lancaster in England and of Pestalozzi in Switzerland.

This report Murphey submitted to the Senate on November 29. The next day he wrote to his friend Thomas Ruffin, afterwards North Carolina's great Chief Justice: "On yesterday I submitted the Report on Public Education. It has cost me great labour since coming to this place [Raleigh], having all my ideas to arrange and then write out in rough, and lastly to transcribe. I know not how the plan will be approved. I bequeath this Report to the State as the Richest Legacy that I shall ever be able to give it."<sup>1</sup>

But the bequest was rejected by those for whose benefit it was intended; the bill introduced by Murphey designed to enact his plan into law was smothered beneath the weight of legislative indifference; and the State waited until its author had been gathered to his fathers before accepting the rich legacy he had left her. How rich this legacy was in practical wisdom I have already told you enough, I hope, for you to appreciate; how rich it was in beauty of style, profound philosophy, and nobility of sentiment

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1. Hoyt.

a few epigrams—which I cannot resist the temptation to quote—will show. Says he:<sup>1</sup>

“Knowledge . . . lights up the path of duty, unfolds the reasons of obedience, and points out to man the purposes of his existence.”

“There is a gentleness in wisdom, which softens the angry passions of the soul, and gives exercise to its generous sensibilities.”

“True wisdom teaches men to be good rather than great.”

“Genius delights to toil with difficulties; they discipline its powers and animate its courage.”

The following passage from his report of 1817 on “the new science” of pedagogy ought to be of especial interest to the students of a Normal College:

“The great object of education is intellectual and moral improvement; and that mode of instruction is to be preferred which best serves to effect this object. That mode is to be found only in a correct knowledge of the human mind, its habits, passions, and manner of operation. . . . The new science [of Pedagogy] has given birth to new methods of instruction; methods, which being founded upon a correct knowledge of the faculties of the mind, have eminently facilitated their development. Pestalozzi in Switzerland and Joseph Lancaster in England, seem to have been most successful in the application of new methods to the instruction of children. Their methods are different, but each is founded upon a profound knowledge of the human mind. The basis of each method is, *the excitement of the curiosity of children*; thereby awakening their minds and pre-

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1. Report of 1816.

paring them to receive instruction. . . . Your committee indulge the hope that the Board of Public Instruction, and the professors and teachers in these respective institutions [of the public school system], will use their best endeavors to adopt and enforce the best methods of instruction which the present state of knowledge will enable them to devise."

And finally he enforced the obligation of the State to provide educational facilities for her children in the following fine passage:

"Providence, in the impartial distribution of its favours, whilst it has denied to the poor many of the comforts of life, has generally bestowed upon them the blessing of intelligent children. Poverty is the school of genius; it is a school in which the active powers of man are developed and disciplined, and in which that moral courage is acquired, which enables him to toil with difficulties, privations and want. From this school generally come forth those men who act the principal parts upon the theatre of life; men who impress a character upon the age in which they live. But it is a School which if left to itself runs wild; vice in all its depraved forms grows up in it. The State should take this school under her special care, and nurturing the genius which there grows in rich luxuriance, give to it an honorable and profitable direction—poor children are the peculiar property of the State, and by proper cultivation they will constitute a fund of intellectual and moral worth, which will greatly subserve the Public Interest."

Five years after this report was submitted to the Senate, Bartlett Yancey, a former student of law under Judge Murphey, drafted a bill which resulted

in the creation of the Literary Fund; and in 1839 when the Legislature enacted the first public school law of North Carolina, it turned for its model to Murphey's report of 1817.

One other feature of Murphey's grand plan for the forward movement of North Carolina remains to be noticed. We have already seen how the self-ignorance and depreciation, lack of State pride and independence of character of North Carolina depressed his spirits. In order to enlighten their ignorance, to arouse a proper State pride, Murphey planned a great historical and scientific work on North Carolina. He had hoped that the knowledge that North Carolina had a great history would inspire the men of his generation with respect and love for the State, would make them feel that to be a Carolinian was something to be justly proud of, and would arouse in them an ambition to be worthy of their inheritance. In a letter, dated July 20, 1821, to General Joseph Graham, a distinguished survivor of the Revolution, he set forth his plans and purposes as follows:

“Your letter to Colonel Conner first suggested to me the plan of a work which I will execute if I live. It is a work on the history, soil, climate, legislation, civil institutions, literature, etc., of this State. Soon after reading your letter, I turned my attention to the subject in the few hours which I could snatch from business, and was surprised to find what abundant materials could, with care and diligence, be collected—materials which if well disposed would furnish matter for one of the most interesting works that has been published in this country. We want such a work. We neither know ourselves nor are we

known to others. Such a work, well executed, would add very much to our standing in the Union, and make our State respectable in our own eyes. Amidst the cares and anxieties which surround me, I cannot cherish a hope, that I could do more than merely guide the labors of some man, who would take up the work after me, and prosecute it to perfection. I love North Carolina, and love her the more because so much injustice has been done her. We want pride. We want independence. We want magnanimity. Knowing nothing of ourselves, we have nothing in our history to which we can turn with conscious pride. We know nothing of our State, and care nothing about it. We want some great stimulus to put us all in motion, and induce us to waive little jealousies, and combine in one general march to one great purpose."

For this work he gathered a vast amount of material from many different sources, both public and private, both within and without the State. He petitioned the Legislature for aid; he appealed to surviving leaders of the Revolution and to the families of the dead; and he had the archives of England searched and an index of the material found there relating to North Carolina made for his use.<sup>1</sup> His plan, says Governor Graham, "was more voluminous, and embraced a greater variety of topics, than would have been preferred by the generality of readers, but its very magnitude showed the comprehension of his genius and the intrepidity of his mind. Beyond one or two chapters on the Indian tribes of the State, he

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1. All of his papers on this subject are printed in Hoyt: Papers of Archibald D. Murphey.



appears to have done but little towards its composition, though his collection of materials, directing attention to the subject, and rescuing from oblivion much that was passing away, rendered the undertaking itself a great public benefit. Decayed health and a ruined fortune arrested him in mid career, put a stop to his favorite enterprise, and clouded with poverty and adversity the evening of his days."

As a lawyer Murphey's success enabled him to accumulate a considerable estate; as a business man his failure involved him in ruin, suffering and humiliation. The hard times which prevailed throughout the country in the early twenties swept away his fortune, and left him heavily in debt.

It is, of course, impossible for a man to participate in the business and political life of his time as long and actively as Murphey did without raising up enemies. Enemies Murphey made, and these, taking full advantage of his misfortune, now pounced upon him with intent to hasten his ruin and break his spirit. They had him arrested, seized and thrown into prison for the crime of owing an honest debt—for that barbarous method of punishing misfortune had not been abolished in North Carolina even as late as 1820. Resigning from the Superior Court bench, Murphey returned to the practice of the law hoping to retrieve his fortune and save from ruin the friends who had loaned him money and endorsed his notes. Had his health remained good, he would probably have succeeded, but this failed him in the very hour of his need, and though in the few years that remained of life he rendered important services to the State, nevertheless he never regained that buoyancy of spirits, that sanguineness of tem-

perament, that confidence of convictions, that had previously distinguished him in all his works. As he looked back over his career it seemed to him that everything on which he had set his heart had failed. His program of internal improvements had not been carried into execution, his plan for a public school system had been rejected, and his great historical and scientific work on the State remained unfinished. Time, however, has given us a better perspective from which to view his career. His dreams of inland water-ways, of good roads, of public schools, of the collection, preservation and publication of her historical sources by the State, have all become realities, the inspiration of which we trace to his labors.

Thus his triumph came, not in his own life-time, it is true, but it came nevertheless, and we today, hailing him as the "Father of Public Education in North Carolina," have given to his name that high place in the history of the State that his ambition coveted.

### III

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## David Lowry Swain'

Murphey's experience with his measures for internal improvements and public schools, as I pointed out in my last two lectures, demonstrated to him and to the other progressive leaders of the State the necessity of securing political reforms before they could indulge any hopes of succeeding in their economic and educational policies. The East with its superior advantages for marketing its products did not feel the necessity for internal improvements that pressed upon the West, while its aristocratic social life, growing out of the plantation system and slave labor, was antagonistic to the very ideals upon which a system of public education must be founded. Consequently the Eastern leaders lined up almost solidly against Murphey's program, and by reason of their control of the State Government as it was organized under the Constitution of 1776, they were able to block every measure proposed by the West for bringing North Carolina in line with the progressive States of the Union. Murphey and the other Western leaders, therefore, early in the struggle,

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1. The following sketches should be studied in connection with this lecture:—Vance, Z. B.: *Memoir of David Lowry Swain*. Peele's *Lives of Distinguished North Carolinians*, 229-55. Ashe: *David Lowry Swain, Biog. Hist. of N. C.*, I., 447-58.

came to the conclusion that their fundamental problem was the problem of political reform. In 1816, the same year in which Murphey first introduced his educational program, he submitted a report on the necessity of calling a convention for the purpose of amending the Constitution. In this report he said: "The principal defect [in the Constitution] is the inequality of representation in the Legislature," and brought forcibly to the attention of the Legislature the injustice with which this inequality bore upon the majority of the people of the State. "That the majority should govern," said he, "is one of the first principles of a republican system of government. The conditions of the State have so changed since the Constitution was adopted that this principle no longer operates. The political power now resides in a small minority." He proposed, therefore, that an election should be held upon the question of calling a convention to amend the Constitution in this and other important respects. As usual, however, the East arrayed itself against this proposition and the resolution was defeated.<sup>1</sup>

As the years passed, however, the inequality pointed out by Murphey not only became greater, but other questions arose which complicated the situation and introduced new elements into it. Two of these finally induced enough Eastern men to join in the campaign for a convention to assure the triumph of the West. These were the election of William Gaston a judge of the Supreme Court and the burning of the State Capitol. A word of explanation is nec-

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1. Senate Journal, 48.

essary to point out the bearing of these incidents on the Convention question.

The 32nd Article of the Constitution of 1776 declared any person ineligible to public office in North Carolina "who shall deny the Being of God, or the truth of the Protestant Religion, or the divine authority of either the Old or the New Testament." Part of this clause was intended to prevent the election of Roman Catholics to office, but the ablest men of that day had come to the conclusion that the clause was not only out of harmony with the spirit of our government and incompatible with the enlightened liberality of the Nineteenth Century, but that it was meaningless and, therefore, impossible of any reasonable interpretation. Consequently it had always been inoperative. In 1833, however, William Gaston, a Roman Catholic, was elected a judge of the Supreme Court. He maintained with unanswerable logic that the 32nd Article did not forbid his acceptance of the office, and with this position the leading members of the legal profession in the State agreed. Gaston felt, however, that the presence of the clause in the Constitution was a reflection upon men of his faith and a relic of Eighteenth century bigotry that for the honor of the State ought to be stricken out. Himself an Eastern man, his great ability as a statesman, his national reputation as a jurist, his lofty and unimpeachable character as a man, and the universal esteem and popularity which he had long enjoyed throughout the State, were matters of great pride to the people of his section; and after his election to the Supreme Court many of them were ready to vote for a convention to remove from the Constitution a clause that

they regarded as a stigma upon their greatest and most beloved leader.

The Capitol was burned in 1831, and immediately an agitation was begun to have the seat of government moved from Raleigh to Fayetteville. Raleigh was still a country village, the capital of the State in name only, and with no prospects of ever becoming a real political and commercial center. Many people felt that Fayetteville's superior advantages for commerce if combined with the advantages which always attend the political capital of a State, would develop that town into a real political and commercial center which, as we have seen, was one of the prime needs of North Carolina. As the removal of the Capitol required an amendment to the Constitution the Fayetteville party were now eager to join with the West in support of a bill to call a convention.<sup>1</sup>

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1. In 1831 a member of the General Assembly described the party divisions in the Legislature in the following passage in a private letter: "We are distracted—rent asunder, by factions and the result of the legislative discussions and dissensions will be (I fear) that we shall separate in anger, after having proved most unprofitable servants. There are five parties here. The largest—but it does not quite constitute a majority—is for rebuilding the Capitol and is opposed to a Convention in every form. This may be termed the Eastern party. The next, in point of magnitude, is the Western party—they want a reconstruction of our Constitution with respect to political power and want no more, but will either keep the government at Raleigh or remove it to Fayetteville, as the one or the other will favor their great end. The third, in point of size, is the Fayetteville party; their main object is removal—but they are willing, also, to go for a general Convention. The two others are of about the same magnitude—the Northwestern and Southwestern parties. The former want a modification of the Constitution, but are utterly opposed to a removal, and the latter want a removal, but resist alterations of the Constitution." Connor, H. G.: "The Convention of 1835," North Carolina Booklet, VIII. 2, p. 94.

A third element which had become an important one in the situation was the great democratic movement, world-wide in its sweep, that was then shaking the foundations of every English-speaking government of the world. In England this movement found expression in the Catholic Emancipation Act, in the act abolishing slavery throughout the British Empire, and in the great Reform Bill of 1832; in America it revealed itself in the creation of new States with constitutions recognizing population as the only basis of representation, in the extension of the suffrage in nearly all the old States, in the election of Andrew Jackson as President of the United States, and in the growth of a strong anti-slavery sentiment in the nation.<sup>1</sup> It was impossible for North Carolina long to resist the influence of this universal onward sweep of democracy and all that was needed to bring the State in line with this progressive movement was the appearance of a leader with the ability, the tact, and the personal popularity to unite in one solid phalanx the various forces that I have described.

Out of the West, from beyond the rugged peaks of the Blue Ridge, a region since become famous the world over for the grandeur of its scenery and the purity of its climate, but at that time as unknown to the great majority of the people of the State as were the Highlands of Scotland, this leader suddenly appeared. A young man, just passed thirty, his out-

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1. For a fuller discussion of this movement and its influence on North Carolina politics see the writer's "Historical Foundations of Democracy in North Carolina," Publications of the North Carolina Historical Commission, Bulletin No. 12.

ward appearance gave as little promise of leadership as it is conceivable for any person to have. Described as "a malformation in person, out of proportion in physical conformation, apparently thrown together in haste, and manufactured from the scattered debris of material that had been used in other work; . . . gawky, lanky, with a nasal twang that proclaimed him an alien, and a pedal propulsion that often awakened derision," he nevertheless was endowed with such amiability of temperament, intellectual ability, and nobility of character that he immediately attained a universal popularity that gave him a place of leadership in the affairs of the State at a younger age than any other man in our history.

This man was David Lowry Swain of Buncombe county. Born in 1801, he received a meager education in the preparatory schools of the neighborhood, and later entered the junior class at the University of North Carolina. But for some unknown reason he withdrew from college at the end of four months, and removed to Raleigh where he studied law under Chief Justice Taylor. While in Raleigh he not only pursued his legal studies with diligence, but likewise entered upon a course of study that is said to appeal rather to the heart than to the head. In 1822 he finished his studies and, as Governor Vance puts it, returned to the mountains "with his license in his pocket and a sweetheart in his eye." There he went hopefully to work and became almost immediately in possession of a lucrative practice. Quick to perceive his ability and integrity, the people of Buncombe county, in 1824, elected him a member of the General Assembly in which he served five terms. As a legislator he aligned himself with the progres-



sive leaders of his section and gave his support to measures designed to establish a system of internal improvements, public schools, amendments to the Constitution, and other similar forward movements. "In his character as a legislator," says Governor Vance, "he was distinguished for his industry and his attention to details, especially in the department of statistics and taxation, in which he soon became the highest authority in the body of which he was a member. He was prominent in getting the bill passed for the building of the French Broad Turnpike, a measure which revolutionized the intercourse between Tennessee, Kentucky, and South Carolina, bringing an immense stream of emigration, travel, and trade through western North Carolina, and adding greatly to his own popularity among the people of that region."<sup>1</sup>

His popularity, however, was not confined to the people of his own section. His association with members of the Legislature had made him as universally esteemed in the East as in the West. A striking illustration of this occurred in 1827. A contention springing up between the candidates for the position of solicitor of the extreme eastern district, and none of them being willing to give way, they finally agreed to withdraw in favor of Swain, although his residence was in the extreme western part of the State. After a year's service as solicitor Swain resigned. In 1830 a contest arose in the Legislature over the election of a judge in the Raleigh district. Henry Seawell, one of the most emi-

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1. Address on Swain in Peele's *Lives of Distinguished North Carolinians*.

ment lawyers at the Raleigh bar, was the leading candidate. His opponents had brought forward various candidates in opposition to Seawell but in vain. Finally in a last effort, they nominated Swain and triumphantly elected him, or as one enthusiastic member said: "Then we took up old 'warping bars' from Buncombe and warped him out." Thus before he had reached his thirtieth birthday Swain had served five terms in the Legislature, one term as solicitor, and had been elected a judge of the Superior Court. After two years of service as a judge, at the age of thirty-two he was elected governor, the youngest man ever elevated to that high office in the history of North Carolina. He was re-elected in 1833, and again in 1834. The popularity of which these facts are evidence was no small factor in Swain's success in inducing the Legislature of 1833 to pass the Convention bill; and of his still greater success in inducing the Convention to adopt the amendments to the Constitution which the West had been so long advocating.

The policies that Swain advocated as governor entitled him to a high place among the progressive governors of North Carolina. His letter-book shows that his time and labors were especially given to the questions of constitutional reform, the coast defences of North Carolina, internal improvements, taxation and financial reform, and other important matters of domestic concern. In his annual messages to the Legislature he discussed these and other problems with great ability and force. He struck hard and vigorous blows at the old *laissez faire* policy that had so long characterized the legislation of North Carolina, and perhaps it is no exaggeration to say

that to his tact and personal popularity with men of all sections, more than to any other single cause, was due the abandonment of that policy during his administration. Swain inaugurated no new policy. He simply followed in the footsteps of Murphey. He lacked the largeness of vision, the originality of conception, the poetic imagination that characterized Murphey's work; but he had what Murphey did not possess, the practical knowledge of men and affairs necessary to achieve results, and it was this quality that enabled him to win success where Murphey had met with failure.

From 1776 to 1835 the relations existing between the governors and the Legislature were fundamentally different from what they were prior to the former date or have been since the latter. Prior to 1776 the governors were appointed by the Crown and were responsible to the Crown only. They were the personal representatives of the King and as such felt themselves superior to the Legislature; and they urged their views of public questions with that vigor and emphasis that always attends a feeling of superiority. Since 1835 the governors have been elected by the people to whom alone they are responsible. Their election to the highest office in the State is itself an endorsement by the sovereign people of their policies, and this fact gives to our governors an assurance and feeling of independence which impart force and vigor to their messages to the Legislature. But from 1776 to 1835 the governors were elected annually by the Legislature and were entirely responsible to the Legislature. Their attitude, therefore, was generally one of greater subserviency than was due to their great office, and on public questions

they presented their views with such deference and lack of emphatic conviction that the average message of that period is a rather colorless document.

Swain's messages were an exception to this general criticism. Always respectful and considerate of the opinions of the members of the Legislature, nevertheless he had his own views on all public issues, he stated them frankly and without equivocation, he brought to their support an array of facts and figures that gave them point and emphasis, and he presented them in a clear-cut, vigorous style.

In his first message he pointed out the fact that during the preceding half century more than one-half the total revenues of the State had gone to defray the expenses of the Legislature; declared that no government could be wisely administered in which those who direct the expenditures of the public fund receive more for that service than the amount of their disbursements; and then diplomatically informed the Legislature that for the past fifty years it had not been worth its hire to the State.<sup>1</sup> "I advert to the circumstance," he said, "principally to enable me to urge upon you more forcibly the propriety of entering upon a system of legislation required by the wants of your constituents, commensurate with their resources, and worthy the confidence which they impose in your ability to administer their public affairs." The "system of legislation" that he then discussed embraced internal improvements, education, banks and currency, the revision of the laws, and reform in taxation.

He called attention to the "excitement which

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1. House Journal of 1833, 129-38.

seems to pervade every section of the State upon the subject of Internal Improvements. The opinion seems to be general that the adoption of a more liberal system is essential to the future prosperity of the State." Two methods had been suggested: one that the work should be done by private corporations aided by the State; the other that the State alone should do it. It was characteristic of Swain's practical business sense that he should urge both methods. The great channels of trade, he said, "in which the whole community is interested, and which for that reason will not probably attract and are least likely to be effected by individual enterprise, demand the exclusive attention and patronage of the government." But for improvements of a local character he recommended the formation of private companies to be aided by the State, shrewdly observing: "Individuals will rarely be found anxious to engage in a chimerical scheme; and no more satisfactory evidence of the practicability and usefulness of any work need be required than the fact that those who recommend it to public patronage are willing to test the correctness of their opinions by trusting their own capital to the same hazard."

These recommendations, however, came to naught, for an event was about to happen, the immense significance of which nobody then understood, that was soon to render obsolete all these plans of internal improvements. This event was the advent of the railroad and steam locomotive which was destined to produce changes and results that neither Murphey with all his prophetic vision, nor Swain with all his practical insight could foresee. It was left for another great Carolinian in whom were combined both

Murphey's power of vision and Swain's practical genius to lay the foundation of the State's transportation system and win first place among the "Ante-Bellum Builders of North Carolina."

Swain put himself squarely before the Legislature as favoring public education, but doubted whether it was wise at that time to undertake to establish a system of schools. The sparseness of population and the smallness of the Literary Fund made it problematical whether such a system could be successfully launched at that time, and a failure in the first attempt would cause a reaction that would be fatal. These conditions, however, were temporary, for as he said:

"When, as the result of a wise and liberal system of legislation, the inlets upon our coast shall receive the improvement of which they are susceptible; when our great natural highways, the rivers connected with them, shall assume that condition, in which Providence designs they shall be placed by our hands; when these channels of communication shall be intersected by Railroads and Canals; and as the natural consequence of this state of things, agriculture shall receive her appropriate reward, we will have laid the foundation of a school system, as extensive as our limits, and as enduring as our prosperity. A few individuals will not have been selected and cherished as the peculiar objects of public patronage; but the general character of the country will be elevated, and thousands now too poor to afford the blessings of education of their children, will find this, though the most important, but one of many advantages incident to an improved condition of life. Extended commercial facilities will stimu-

late to agricultural exertion;—increased production afford the means of education; and the diffusion of knowledge operate as the most certain preventive of crime. A more liberal scheme would be better suited to the condition of older and richer communities, and I trust the day is not very far distant when it will be so to ours.”

But Swain was well aware that all these things waited upon political reform, and to the accomplishment of this end he bent his chief energies. The great issue of his administration was the calling of a convention to amend those provisions of the Constitution that related to representation. After expressing his pleasure at meeting the Legislature of 1834, he says:

“That your attention should be mainly directed to objects of State Legislation, cannot be doubted. . . . I will proceed at once to the most important subjects which are in my opinion proper for your consideration. Of these the proposition to amend the Constitution of the State, first introduced into the General Assembly in 1787, and which has continued to command the public attention for nearly half a century, is regarded as most prominent. Upon a subject of such universal interest, and involving so many important considerations, you have a right to expect an unreserved communication of the opinions of the Executive Department. . . . I avail myself of the first fair opportunity, which has been afforded to me, to present my views of this perplexing but interesting question.”<sup>1</sup> He first considered the objec-

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1. House Journal, 131.

tions that had been urged by the opponents of the Convention, and in a few pointed sentences quickly disposed of them. There were but two that seem to merit serious consideration. They were: First, that as the Constitution had made no provision for amendments, the Legislature had no power to call a Constitutional Convention, but that such power rested in the people only; second, that even if the Legislature had the power to call a convention it did not have power to prescribe what amendments the convention should consider, but that this was a matter for the Convention itself to decide.

Swain discussed these points from the historical, the legal, and what one might call the commonsense points of view. In answer to the argument that the Legislature had no power to call a convention, he pointed out the fact that twice already, in 1788 and in 1789, the Constitution had been amended by conventions called by the Legislature; and, in the second place, he showed that in both instances the Legislature had prescribed the amendments which those conventions were permitted to consider. "Without pursuing this discussion further," he said, "the conclusion may be fairly drawn, that a legislative recommendation to the people to select a convention . . . is in strict accordance with first principles, and in precise conformity to all the precedents afforded by our history."

If then a Convention should be called what were the principal objects to be achieved? As stated by Swain, "The great object to be attained is a radical change in the basis of representation." After discussing the origin and history of the plan incorporated in the Constitution of 1776, the changes in the



conditions of the State that made amendments of that plan advisable, the discontent of the West, the controversies between the sections to which it had given rise, he says:

“It is certain that it subjects the majority to the rule of the minority, and confers on those who pay comparatively but a small proportion of the public expense, the power to control the entire resources of the country. If the wisdom, patriotism and spirit of compromise requisite to the permanent and satisfactory adjustment of this controversy, shall be found united in the present General Assembly, you will achieve a triumph of inestimable importance, and entitle yourselves to the lasting gratitude of posterity.”

The question thus brought sharply to the attention of the Legislature in the ablest message ever presented on that subject, the other questions with which it had now become complicated, and the general democratic movement throughout the world, which I have described, overbore the opposition to the more conservative elements and enabled the West to win the first great victory for constitutional reform in North Carolina. A bill was introduced to submit to the people at a general election, the question of calling a convention to amend the Constitution by changing the basis of representation, by abolishing the right of certain towns to send members to the General Assembly, by taking away from the Legislature the election of the governor and giving it to the people, by taking the right of voting away from free negroes, and by striking out the sectarian test for office-holding. In the House of Commons 13 eastern men joined with the West and passed the bill by

a vote of 66 to 62. In the Senate the contest was even closer, the advocates of the Convention winning by a vote of 31 to 30. Every senator west of Raleigh, except one, voted for the Convention, and they were joined by four eastern senators whose courage in opposing the interest of their section enabled the West to achieve its great victory. No greater triumph for democracy was ever won in North Carolina. For the first time in their history the people of the State were to be consulted on a great problem of government; for the first time the decision of a great political issue was referred directly to the people.

This first referendum resulted in a victory for democracy. Some curiously interesting results appear in the election returns. For instance there were 30 eastern counties in each of which less than 100 votes were cast for the Convention. The total vote of those thirty eastern counties was 1004 for the Convention, 15,335 against it. On the other hand, there were eighteen western counties in each of which less than 100 votes were cast against the Convention. The total vote for the Convention in these western counties was 16,916, the total vote against it in these western counties was only 602. In Rowan county there were two men and in Rutherford county but one who voted against the Convention. The total vote for the Convention was 27,550, the total against it 21,694.<sup>1</sup> Thus the people of the State after more than fifty years of agitation, in which deep passions had been aroused, registered their verdict in favor of a convention charged with the

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1. The election returns by counties are printed in North Carolina Manual for 1913, 1010-12.

duty of purging their Constitution of its undemocratic features which it had inherited from colonial times.

The Convention met in Raleigh, June 4, 1835, with 128 delegates present. The public careers of its members are sufficient evidence of their ability and experience. Three either had been or were to become United States senators; three had served the State as governors, and two more later became governors; six rendered conspicuous service on the bench; eleven had presided over one or the other branch of the General Assembly; fifteen either had been or later became members of Congress; and eighty-eight had represented their constituents in the State Legislature. From Bladen county came John Owen, who had served three terms as governor; from Rowan, Charles Fisher, who had twelve times represented his county in the General Assembly, where he had long led the western forces in their fight for a convention; Weldon N. Edwards, of Warren, had served twelve years in the Legislature and ten years as the successor of Nathaniel Macon in Congress; Daniel M. Barringer, of Cabarrus, after long service both in the State Legislature and in the National Congress, was later to represent his country at the Court of Spain; John Branch, of Halifax, had been distinguished for his services as legislator, as governor, as United States senator, and as Secretary of the Navy in the Cabinet of Andrew Jackson; Henry Seawell, of Wake, John D. Toomer, of Cumberland, and Joseph J. Daniel, of Halifax, were eminent as advocates at the bar and judges on the bench; John M. Morehead, of Guilford, had already

served his people in the Legislature and was destined to greater fame in other fields of activity.

But the three most conspicuous figures in the Convention, upon whom the eyes of the whole State were centered, were Nathaniel Macon, of Warren, William Gaston, of Craven, and David L. Swain, of Buncombe. Macon had played a great part in the life of the State and Nation. Five times elected to the Legislature, twelve times to the National Congress, three times to the United States Senate, his public career covered a period of forty-two years. He had been three times chosen speaker of the National House of Representatives, and three times President of the United States Senate, and had twice been invited to sit in the cabinet of Thomas Jefferson. At the age of seventy he had voluntarily retired from public life, and was quietly spending his last days on his farm, when he was called by his people to give them the benefit of his wisdom in the momentous tasks facing the Convention of 1835. Rising above all party or sectional prejudices, he was recognized by all as the fittest man for president of the Convention to which office he was unanimously elected. He was, declared John Randolph, "the best, wisest, and purest man I ever knew."

William Gaston, after service in the State Legislature and in Congress, had recently been elevated to the Supreme Court. Of him Judge Battle said: "Though left an orphan in earliest infancy in a country where he had no kindred, save a widowed mother and an infant sister, though professing a religious faith almost proscribed, and attached to a political party always in the minority, he yet rose to the highest summit of professional distinction, ac-

quired, during a brief career in the Legislature of his State, a preponderating influence in its councils, was among the foremost of the great in the national assembly, was selected by almost general acclamation to preside in the highest judicial tribunal known to our land, and, more than all, won and maintained to the day of his death, the confidence, the admiration, and the affection of his countrymen."<sup>1</sup> Standing with uncovered head by Gaston's tomb, Edward Everett declared with unconcealed emotion: "This eminent man had few equals and no superiors."

Swain, then serving his third year as governor, was the recognized leader of the western forces. To his skilful leadership, his wide and varied learning, his mastery of all the facts and figures bearing upon the questions at issue, his fairness towards opponents, and his patience and tact in dealing with men, the West to a large degree owed its triumph. Though generally tactful and diplomatic in his handling of delicate situations, he knew when and how to speak plainly and forcibly, and could when necessity called for it let fall a storm of wrathful indignation at wrong and injustice that made men quail. Describing such an incident during Swain's speech on the amendment relating to representation, the late R. B. Crecy, who was an eye-witness of it, writes: "He presented all the points of the case from the western point of view. It was bold, defiant, logical, argumentative and sometimes eloquent. He was fond of Scriptural quotations, and often used them with

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1. Address on Gaston in Peele's *Lives of Distinguished North Carolinians*, 150-160.

great effect. Once, towering in his wrath and raising his index finger as in defiance of Eastern Carolina, he said: 'Let our eastern brethren beware. If they do not grant our peaceful appeal for a change in the basis of representation, we will rise like the strong man in his unshorn might and pull down the pillars of the political temple.'"<sup>1</sup> Such a threat from a man of Swain's quiet and amiable temperament shook the convention to its very foundations.

Swain was, as a rule, one of the silent members of the Convention. He spoke but seldom, and then briefly. His chief work was to direct the efforts of his supporters, to conciliate malcontents, to compromise differences on non-essentials, and to keep his followers intact on the great point—representation in the General Assembly based on population. On this question he was as firm as adamant, even threatening that unless justice were done the western counties would throw off their allegiance to the State and set up for themselves. The Convention, he said, was selected for the express purpose of reforming the basis of representation. Minor points might have attracted the attention of a few individuals, but this was the main point, the great business for which they were selected. He declared that he could say with perfect sincerity that if he knew his own heart, no member of the Convention came to its deliberations with less of party or sectional feeling, or was more anxious to terminate forever the differences between the two sections of the State than he. He hoped that a similar feeling influenced the majority of the Convention, for the utmost caution and

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1. Grandfather's Tales of North Carolina History, 131.

circumspection was necessary to a happy termination of their labors and if passion and prejudice were permitted to assume control, incalculable injury might result from it. It was their solemn duty, therefore, to settle this controversy. As for himself he was disposed to conceal nothing. Every view he entertained as to the relative advantages which would be derived by each section of the State from the proposed amendment was at the service of all who desired it; and he had no hesitation in stating that if by anything that this Convention did or left undone, injustice should be done to any large portion of the State, the struggles in which they were involved would not terminate with the adjournment of that body. "The general sense of injury," he exclaimed, "will impel the people as one man to rend asunder the cords which bind the body politic and stand forth in their unshorn might and majesty."<sup>1</sup>

This firm stand, coupled with tact and diplomacy in dealing with the other questions that came up, resulted in the Convention's agreeing to submit to a vote of the people amendments to make property the basis of representation in the Senate, population in the House of Commons; to abolish borough representation; to disfranchise free negroes; to take from the Legislature and give to the people the election of the governor; to make the governor's term two years instead of one year; to substitute in the 32nd Article the word "Christian" for the word "Protestant;" and to fix a definite manner of proposing and adopting amendments to the Constitution in the future. The election on these proposals resulted in

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1. Debates in the Convention of 1835, 88-91.

a vote of 26,771 for, and 21,606 against them.<sup>1</sup> Of the 26,771 votes cast for the amendments, 23,491 came from the counties west of Raleigh; and of the 21,606 votes cast against them, 19,279 came from counties east of Raleigh. As in the election calling the Convention the returns revealed some interesting results. For instance, in the West,

Burke county cast	1359 for, 1 against;
Rutherford cast	1557 for, 2 against;
Surry cast	1751 for, 4 against;
Wilkes cast	1757 for, 8 against;
Haywood cast	484 for, 8 against;

and in the East,

Brunswick cast	0 for, 466 against;
Tyrrell cast	1 for, 459 against;
Hyde cast	2 for, 431 against;
Columbus cast	3 for, 391 against;
Bladen cast	6 for, 564 against;
Chowan cast	7 for, 332 against;
Hertford cast	7 for, 376 against;
Pasquotank cast	7 for, 442 against;
Nash cast	8 for, 757 against;
Greene cast	9 for, 423 against.

These votes show how sharp and irreconcilable had been the division between the two sections of the State. So long as this division remained, it was impossible for North Carolina to undertake any great forward movement for educational, industrial or social betterment that required the united support of her people. The chief work, therefore, of the Convention of 1835 was to remove the cause of this di-

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1. The returns are printed in North Carolina Manual, 1913, pp. 1010-12.



vergence of interests, and to set in motion a train of events that have gradually removed sectional issues and united the people of North Carolina into one solid homogeneous whole. Chief among these events, as I said in my opening lecture, were the construction of the railroads which have united the people of the East with those of the West in the bonds of trade and social communion; and the organization of the public school system which has given the people of the two sections a common interest that has contributed to their intellectual solidarity. Had no other results followed from the Convention of 1835, nevertheless it would be entitled to rank among the greatest events of our history.

But other results did follow. The work of the Convention brought into existence two political institutions which, though unrecognized by the Constitution, have been powerful factors in uniting the people and in shaping the history of the State. One of these is the State Conventions of political parties, the other, the canvass of the State before elections by the nominees for State offices. So long as the governor was elected by the Legislature, the people not only had no voice in the election, but had even less voice in selecting the party candidates. This selection was made by a small coterie of party leaders—in modern political parlance, the ring—and their followers in the Legislature merely ratified their choice. But when the election of governor was given to the people, it became necessary to give the people some voice in selecting their candidates. Consequently the political convention, composed of delegates representing the rank and file of the party, became an institution. These conventions not only named can-

didates, but they also issued platforms stating the measures which their candidates favored. It became necessary, therefore, since the people now voted directly on the candidates, for the candidates to go before the people and discuss the measures they favored. Many conservative statesmen, foreseeing this result, opposed the amendment changing the mode of electing governors. One of the delegates in the Convention declared that he had lately seen a gentleman from Tennessee, where the governor was elected by the people, who told him that "candidates were traveling through the State on an electioneering campaign at expense and trouble to themselves and great annoyance to the people." Perhaps this custom has at times proved annoying, nevertheless, it cannot be denied that it has brought the people into closer touch with their government, familiarized them with political questions, imposed upon them a larger responsibility in the determination of governmental policies, and greatly advanced the cause of democracy.

With the adjournment of the Convention of 1835 and the expiration of his third term as governor, Swain's political career came to an end. Although only thirty-four years of age he had, nevertheless held the highest offices within the gift of the State and consequently his ambition had nothing more to look forward to in politics. Just before the close of his term as governor, the presidency of the University became vacant by the death of President Joseph Caldwell, and Swain conceived a desire to be his successor. He was not, as we have seen, a man of liberal education and on that account there was some opposition to his election as President of the

University. On the other hand he had demonstrated his ability as a good executive and it was thought that a man who had shown that he knew so well how to manage men could not fail to know how to manage boys. This view prevailed with the trustees, and Swain was elected. Some of the scholars of the Faculty were much disgusted. One of them sneeringly declared that "the people of North Carolina had done everything they could for Swain in politics and now they were going to send him to the University to be educated." But although Swain was not a scholar in the technical sense of the word, he was by no means an ignorant man. His knowledge of political economy, of history, and of literature, all of which he had studied profoundly, had given him a broad and liberal culture which equalled, if it did not exceed that of his more scholarly critics.

From the time Swain entered upon his duties as President of the University few notable events occurred in his career to attract the attention of the biographer; the story of his life from 1835 until his death is the history of the University for that period, and amply vindicates the judgment of those who placed him at its head. He gathered around him the ablest Faculty in any institution of the slave-holding states, he extended and enriched the course of study, he increased the number of students from about 90 to upwards of 400, and he placed the University first among the collegiate institutions of the South. But his greatest service was his personal influence on the young men with whom he came in contact. As great as had been his own personal share in shaping the history of the State, it was as nothing in comparison with what he did through his influence in

moulding the characters and shaping the careers of her future leaders. A single illustration selected from a great number will suffice to show how great his influence was.

Among those whose characters and careers were thus influenced by contact with Swain at the University, was a mountain lad destined, like Swain himself, to become the Chief Magistrate of North Carolina at the early age of thirty-two, who in a long career of public service earned a place in history as North Carolina's greatest son. This lad was Zebulon Baird Vance. In an address at the University in 1877 Vance acknowledged the influence that Swain had exercised in shaping his career in the following passage inspired by his own personal experience. He says, referring to Governor Swain: "Although the work he did here was undoubtedly the great work of his life, it is impossible for us to compute it. As with the silent forces of nature, which we know to be the greatest that are exerted in this world, but which yet elude the grasp of our senses, so it is impossible for us to measure the power of the able and faithful teacher. . . . No man ever lived in North Carolina whose opportunities for thus influencing those who control her destinies have been greater than Governor Swain's were. . . . The sparks of good which he elicited, the trains of generous ambition which he set on fire, the number of young lives which his teachings have directed into the paths of virtue and knowledge, and colored with the hues of heaven—who but God shall tell? . . . How many great thoughts worked out in the still watches of the night; how many noble orations in the forum, stirring the hearts of men; how many eloquent and mo-

mentous discourses in the pulpit; how many bold strokes of patriotic statesmanship; how many daring deeds and sublime deaths on bloody fields of battle; how many good and generous and honest things done in secret; how many evil things and sore temptations resisted; in short, how much of that which constitutes the public and private virtue of our people, the prosperity, the honor, and the glory of our State might not be traced to the initial inspiration of David L. Swain! Say what you will for the mighty things done by the mighty ones of earth, but here is the truest honor and renown. . . . I had the honor—and I consider it both an honor and a happy fortune—to be on terms of confidential intimacy with him from my first entrance into the University until his death. We were in the utmost accord on all questions pertaining to church and state, and during my subsequent career, especially in those troublous years of war, I consulted him more frequently perhaps than any other man in the State, except Governor Graham.”<sup>1</sup>

The outbreak of war in 1861 presented new and greater difficulties to President Swain. He determined if it were humanly possible that even in the stress of war the doors of the University should remain open. It was a gigantic task, for such was the impetuosity with which the students rushed to arms at the call of their states that of the eighty members of the Freshman class of 1860 but one remained to pursue his studies, and he too had offered his services to the Confederacy and had been rejected on ac-

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1. This address is printed in Peele's *Lives of Distinguished North Carolinians*, 229-255.

count of his health. At the close of the year 1860, there were 430 students in the University; on the 15th of October, 1863, there were only 63. In a letter of that date to Jefferson Davis, sending a resolution of the trustees requesting that students might be exempt from military service until they had finished their college work, President Swain gives us a vivid idea not only of the difficulties with which he was contending but also of the terribleness of war. Says he:

“A simple statement of the facts, which seem to me to be pertinent, without any attempt to illustrate and enforce them by argument, will, I suppose, sufficiently accomplish the purposes of the trustees.

“At the close of the collegiate year 1859-'60 (June 7, 1860), the whole number of students in our catalogue was 430. . . .

“Of the eight young men who received the first distinction in the Senior class, four are in the grave, and a fifth a wounded prisoner. More than a seventh of the aggregate number of graduates are known to have fallen in battle.

“The Freshman class of eighty members pressed into service with such impetuosity, that but a single individual remained to graduate at the last commencement; and he in the intervening time had entered the army, been discharged on account of impaired health, and was permitted by special favor to rejoin his class.

“The faculty at that time was composed of fourteen members, no one of whom was liable to conscription. Five of the fourteen were permitted by the trustees to volunteer. One of these has recently returned from a long imprisonment in Ohio, with a

ruined constitution. A second is a wounded prisoner, now at Baltimore. A third fell at Gettysburg. The remaining two are in active field service at present.

“The nine gentlemen who now constitute the corps of instructors are, with a single exception, clergymen, or laymen beyond the age of conscription. No one of them has a son of the requisite age, who has not entered the service as a volunteer. Five of the eight sons of members of the faculty are now in active service; one fell mortally wounded at Gettysburg; another at South Mountain.

“The village of Chapel Hill owes its existence to the University, and is of course materially affected by the prosperity or decline of the institution. The young men of the village responded to the call of their country with the same alacrity which characterized the college classes; and fifteen of them—a larger proportion than is exhibited in any other town or village in the State—have already fallen in battle. The departed are more numerous than the survivors; and the melancholy fact is prominent with respect to both the village and the University, that the most promising young men have been the earliest victims.

“Without entering into further details, permit me to assure you as the result of extensive and careful observation and inquiry, that I know of no similar institution or community in the Confederacy that has rendered greater services, or endured greater losses and privations, than the University of North Carolina, and the village of Chapel Hill.

“The number of students at present here is 63. . . .

“A rigid enforcement of the conscription act may

take from us nine or ten young men with physical constitutions in general, better suited to the quiet pursuits of literature and science than to military service. They can make no appreciable addition to the army; but their withdrawal may very seriously affect our organization, and in its ultimate effects cause us to close the doors of the oldest University at present accessible to the students of the Confederacy."<sup>1</sup>

President Davis issued the order requested, declaring that "the seed-corn should not be ground up." But the exigencies of war became too pressing, and within another year the order was recalled and every student at the University capable of bearing arms joined the Confederate army. Nevertheless the doors of the University remained open; even after the Confederacy had fallen and the buildings of the University turned into barracks and stables for the 4,000 Michigan cavalry which occupied Chapel Hill, the old bell was wrung daily, prayers were said in the Chapel, and the dozen students, who had wandered back to their old haunts, this one with an arm missing, that one without a leg, veterans in their youth, attended their daily recitations. It was a noble, an heroic achievement, and Swain was justly proud of it as the greatest thing in his life.

But what war failed to do, Reconstruction did. No sooner had the State fallen into the power of the carpet-bag leaders and their black followers, than they seized upon the University, demanded the resig-

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1. Weeks, Stephen B.: *University of North Carolina in the Civil War*, 25-27; the substance of the letter is given in *Battle: History of the University of North Carolina*, I., 732-4.



nation of the President and faculty, sent a guard of negroes to take possession, and, for the first time since 1795, closed up its doors. Fortunately for Swain he had not long to endure this humiliation, to contemplate this ruin of his life's work. In August, 1868, he was thrown from a buggy and severely injured. After lingering for two weeks, on the morning of August 27, he suddenly fainted, and expired without a pain.

Governor Vance, a life-long and intimate associate, in the address from which I have already quoted, gives what seems to me to be a calm and judicious estimate of Swain's life and work. "In many senses of the term Governor Swain was not a great man." As a politician, a lawyer, a judge, a scholar, he is not to be ranked among the great men of North Carolina. "But," says Vance, "in many things he was entitled to be called great, if we mean by that term that he so used the faculties he possessed that he raised himself beyond and above the great mass of his fellows. In him there was a rounded fullness of the qualities, intellectual and moral, which constitute the excellence of manhood, in a degree never excelled by any citizen of North Carolina whom I have personally known, except by William A. Graham. If there was in Swain no one grand quality of intellect which lifted him out of comparison with any but the demigods of our race neither was there any element so wanting as to sink him into or below the common mass. If there were in him no Himalayan peaks of genius, piercing into the regions of everlasting frost and ice, neither were there any yawning chasms of slimy pools below the tide-waters of mediocrity. He rose from the plain of his fellow-men like the Alle-

ghanies, in whose bosom he was born, by regular and easy gradations—so easy that you know not how high you are until you turn to gaze backward—every step surrounded by beauty and fertility—until he rested high over all the land. If there be those who singly tower above him in gifts, or attainments, or distinctions, there are none whom as a whole we can contemplate with more interest, affection, and admiration; none whose work for North Carolina will prove to be more valuable, or more lasting, or more important to future generations; none to whom, at the great final review, the greeting may be more heartily addressed: ‘Servant of God, well done!’ ”

## IV

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### Calvin Henderson Wiley<sup>1</sup>

The political reforms instituted by the Convention of 1835 placed the government of North Carolina in control of the people of the State, and thus paved the way for carrying into effect the educational program of Archibald D. Murphey. After his death, nearly a quarter of a century elapsed before another leader appeared to take up the work that he had begun. At the time of Murphey's death the net result of his labors for public education was the creation of the Literary Fund and organization of the Literary Board. But several years were yet to pass before the Legislature was ready to take its own work seriously. Although they had solemnly set aside this Literary Fund for educational purposes, for ten years the Legislature had not the moral courage to resist the temptation to use the income arising from this fund for other purposes of the State Government. In a single month of 1832 as much as \$64,000 of the Literary Fund was "borrowed" and diverted

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1. See also: Connor, R. D. W.: Calvin Henderson Wiley, *Biog. Hist. of N. C.*, II, 427-41; Weeks, Stephen B., "Beginnings of the Common School System in the South," *Report of the U. S. Commissioner of Education, 1896-97*, Ch. XXIX.; Joyner, J. Y.: Calvin Henderson Wiley, *N. C. Day Program, 1905*; Mebane, C. H., *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina, 1896-97 and 1897-98*.

to other uses than that for which it was created. The treasurer uttering a vigorous protest against this policy, compared the Legislature to the "improvident heir, who wastes in mere indolence what has been saved by the industry and economy of the ancestor for the lasting improvement of the inheritance."<sup>1</sup>

In 1836, however, the Literary Fund was suddenly increased to an amount that made it large enough to command the respect even of the Legislature. In that year, as I stated in my opening lecture, the surplus revenue of the Federal Government was distributed to the several states; and of her share of this fund North Carolina devoted \$1,133,757.39 to the Literary Fund. In 1838, the funds of the Literary Board amounted to more than \$1,390,000 and yielded an income sufficient to give a public school system a fair start. Accordingly the public school law of 1839, which I have already discussed, was enacted, and in 1840 was adopted by all except seven of the counties in the State. There was, however, one fundamental defect in this act. The Literary Board was made the executive head of the school system, and this Board, from the very nature of its composition, was inadequate to attend properly to the variety of duties incumbent upon the executive of such a system. A single executive head was needed. Recommendations for the creation of the office of superintendent of common schools were continuously urged upon the Legislature during a period of twelve years. but with no results. The system accordingly found-

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1. The proceedings and reports of the Literary Board are printed in Coon: Public Education in North Carolina, II, *seriatim*.

ered about on an unexplored sea without a pilot and was on the point of going to wreck when Calvin H. Wiley appeared and took hold of the helm.

Born in 1819, prepared for college at the Caldwell Institute in Greensboro, a graduate of the University of North Carolina, Wiley was admitted to the bar in 1841, and settled in the town of Oxford. Clients were few, and the young attorney found more time than cases on his hands. This time he devoted largely to literary pursuits, in which he always delighted. From 1841 to 1843 he edited the *Oxford Mercury*. In 1847 he published an historical novel called "Alamance; or the Great and Final Experiment." Two years later a second novel appeared under the title of "Roanoke; or where is Utopia?"

But the author found graver work awaiting him than the writing of romances. A close observer of the educational and industrial conditions in North Carolina, he wrote feelingly and eloquently of what he saw. Among other things, he noticed with great solicitude that the people of North Carolina, unaware of the immense resources of their own State, were deserting her by the thousands, seeking in other regions fields for imaginary advantages. He wrote that the State had "long been regarded by its own citizens as a mere nursery to grow up in;" that it had become a great camping ground, the inhabitants considering themselves as merely tenanted here for a while; that thousands sought homes elsewhere, whose sacrifices in moving would have paid for twenty years their share of taxation, sufficient to give to North Carolina all the fancied advantages of those regions whither they went to be taxed with disease and suffering; that the melancholy sign, "For sale,"

seemed plowed in deep, black characters over the whole State; and that even the State flag which waved over the capitol, indicating the sessions of the General Assembly, was jestingly called by our neighbors of Virginia and South Carolina an auctioneer's sign. The "ruinous effects," he wrote, "are eloquently recorded in deserted farms, in wide wastes of gut-tered sedgefields, in neglected resources, in the absence of improvements, and in the hardships, sacrifices and sorrows of constant emigration."<sup>1</sup>

In addition to this deplorable condition of affairs, Wiley observed that:

"It is a fact worthy of being universally known that North Carolina is considered by bookmakers the best mart in the world for uncurrent and trashy productions, and the very refuse of literary quackery is sent out here and circulated among our people. For most of the works of this sort Northern publishers have agencies all over North Carolina, and thus while there are none to circulate our own books, and the people are kept in ignorance of their own history and of the character and resources of their State, they are drugged with foreign narcotics and heavily taxed for the benefit of fabrics that will not sell and cannot be sold where they are manufactured."<sup>2</sup>

These two evils caused him no little anxiety about the future of the State. Careful study of the situation revealed to him but one remedy—universal education. The children must be taught to know and appreciate the opportunities offered at home, and

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1. Report of 1853, 26. Leg. Doc., 1854-55.

2. Weeks: "Beginning of the Common School System in the South." Report of the U. S. Commissioner of Education for 1896-97, 1432.

must be given the training necessary for intelligent use of those opportunities. Year by year the conviction grew steadily upon him that he could render no greater service to North Carolina than by revealing the State to herself through a complete system of public schools. Abandoning personal ambition, he threw himself into this new work with all the energy of his ardent nature.

A study of the public school law of 1839 convinced him that the first step toward reform must be the creation of the office of superintendent of common schools; and to the accomplishment of this object he now set himself with the accustomed vigor of the young reformer on fire with zeal and ambition.

In order to introduce the necessary reforms, he desired a seat in the General Assembly. As he realized that there was no chance of his obtaining this in Granville county, he returned to his native Guilford, and was at once elected a member of the General Assembly of 1850-51. During this session he introduced a bill providing for the appointment of a superintendent of the common schools. He supported his bill with a speech of great power and eloquence, but failed to secure its passage. Disappointed but not disheartened, he again stood for election and was returned. Through his influence a similar bill was introduced by J. B. Cherry of Bertie and passed both Houses.<sup>1</sup> This Act provided for the election of a superintendent by the General Assembly. He was to hold office for a term of two years, or until his successor should be duly appointed and qualified. His duties, as outlined by the act, con-

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1. Chapter 18, Public Acts of 1852.

sisted of the usual ones, such as collecting information, making proper reports, seeing to the enforcement of the school laws, etc. But in the words of Dr. Wiley:

“The head of the common-school system ought to study; like the leader of an army, he ought to have the whole field before him and to initiate every general movement with great care. He ought to study other systems as well as his own; he needs a previous preparation just as much as a lawyer, engineer, or physician.”<sup>1</sup> “His duties cannot be expressed by law, and if he does not possess the spirit of his station, a conformity to the mere letter of legal requirements . . . will not be a discharge of his duties to the public. He is the chief executive head of the system; . . . he ought to be the chief thinking mind; the organ of intercommunication among its parts; the recording memory also of the system. He has also to be the heart as well as the head of the system, infusing into it life, animation and hope, encouraging the desponding and stimulating the energies of the enthusiastic.”

This law once passed, it became necessary to find a man of sufficient ability to undertake the arduous and responsible duties of the office. All voices called on one man. Though he was a Whig, and the Legislature was Democratic, yet State patriotism prevailed over party allegiance, and without solicitation on his part, Wiley was elected in December, 1852. On January 1, 1853, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, he entered upon the duties of his office. Surely no man ever undertook an arduous task with

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1. Report of 1855, 24. Leg. Doc., 1854-55.



a greater sense of the vast personal responsibility that lay upon him. He realized that upon his conduct of the duties of his office depended the life of the common schools. He had everything to do and everybody to instruct. The compass of experience by which he might steer his course, seeking the channels of safety and avoiding the shoals and whirlpools of danger, was lacking to him. But he did not flinch from his duty. His steady hand grasped the helm, guided by a penetrating insight into the murky conditions surrounding him and supported by a heart strong through faith in his cause, in his people and in divine guidance.

The attempt to establish a system of public schools in North Carolina, owing to the lack of proper organization and the absence of an efficient executive head, had proved worse than a failure. Teachers were scarce and inefficient, schoolhouses were worthless, uncomfortable, unhealthy, and inadequate for their purposes, money was squandered, results were meagre, and the confidence of the people in the schools absolutely destroyed.

As a consequence of these conditions, Dr. Wiley found himself faced at the outset by six difficulties:<sup>1</sup> First, the diversified character of the people, resulting in a lack of sympathetic harmony fatal to a systematic conduct of the schools; second, the novelty of the common school idea, from which grew misconceptions of the purposes of the schools and an im-

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1. The discussion of Dr. Wiley's tasks, problems, policies and measures is based on all his reports, speeches, etc., and it is not always practicable to cite the reader to specific utterances in support of every statement. His entire series of reports must be studied as a whole.

patience at their necessarily slow work; third, the illiteracy of the population, which gave birth to a mistrust of the ability of the people to conduct successfully a system of schools; fourth, the erroneous idea that the common schools were mainly charity schools for the poor, from which grew a distaste among many people to accept their benefits; fifth, the lack of feeling of responsibility for the schools among the citizens of the State causing difficulty in getting efficient men to fill the official positions in the counties; finally, the scarcity of teachers, which, of course, struck at the very roots of the system. To meet and overcome these obstacles, there were, as Dr. Wiley wrote, "a thousand little springs invisible to the casual observer to be delicately touched, a thousand nameless duties to be performed, a thousand crosses and difficulties unknown to the world at large."

He went about his work with determination, energy, and patience, having at the beginning six objects in view. They were: To gain information for his own guidance; to let teachers, officers and pupils know and feel that the State as a State was really interested in their welfare; to diffuse information on public school systems in general and the North Carolina system in particular; to enforce the laws; to initiate himself all needful reforms; and finally, to make the schools supply themselves with teachers.

The work was slow, discouraging and tedious, and the superintendent was often compelled to draw heavily on his fund of patience. The results were far beyond his calculations. Old friends were discovered, new ones made and enlisted in the work; enemies were met and routed; tardy officers were

spurred on to more diligent and efficient work; incompetent ones found out and removed; many misconceptions were corrected; colleges, high schools and academies were awakened to a sense of their vital interest in the common schools; unity was gradually introduced into the system; and school men in all parts of the State and in all phases of educational work were taught to see that the interests of all were bound together in one great and ever-widening circle.

One of the most apparent evils which it was necessary for the superintendent to reform was the multiplicity and frequent changes of text-books. Dr. Wiley was often called upon to interfere in this matter, and he felt justified in using all his authority to suppress the evil. "The object of my efforts," he wrote,<sup>1</sup> "was, first to drive from our schools bad books; second, to prevent frequent and injurious changes; . . . and third, to secure the use of a uniform series, whereby expense would be avoided and teachers would be enabled to arrange their pupils in classes." Where suitable text-books could not be found, he set to work with characteristic energy to prepare them himself, always bearing in mind his original desire to awaken North Carolinians to a sense of the great resources of their State. For instance, he notified publishers that he would not approve of any Geography unless he was allowed to correct the text so far as it related to North Carolina. Several publishers consented to this, and he selected "Mitchell's Intermediate Geography." To this book he added an appendix giving a condensed

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1. Report of 1853, p. 10. Leg. Doc., 1854-55.

but accurate account of the State. He directed the preparation of a new map, showing all the railroads, plank roads, and intended routes of travel; and in other ways emphasized the resources and opportunities of the State. "The time is coming," he said with reference to this work, "when very material changes will be effected in the routes of commerce. All things considered, the finest agricultural country in the world is the valley of the Mississippi and its tributaries. . . . Between the nearer Atlantic and this vast granary of the West and Southwest stands the imposing barrier of the Allegheny Mountains, long thought to be an impassable wall, and a limit to the iron track of commerce. But modern science has overcome greater difficulties to secure . . . the shortest passage, and the gallant states of Virginia and Georgia are already storming those heights with every prospect of success, and none of these have so great inducements to undertake the enterprise as the people of North Carolina. Nearly midway the Atlantic coast, in a temperate and healthy climate, is the unchangeable, safe and capacious harbor of Beaufort, and from hence through our fertile uplands and the gorges of our own beautiful mountains, lies the shortest route to the great Southwest. To foreshadow the grand commercial destiny we might attain on the youthful mind of the State and prepare it to grasp and realize the magnificent consummation, I took much pains to have all the proposed railroads over the mountains and their bearings and connections made familiar to the publishers of the geography in question."<sup>1</sup>

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1. *Ibid*, 27.

Nothing in Dr. Wiley's long career of usefulness to the State better illustrates his unselfish devotion to her interests than his action in regard to a series of North Carolina readers prepared by himself for use in the schools. The purpose of the work was the same as that of his supplement to Mitchell's Geography. It contained a "familiar history and description of the State, with compositions in prose and verse by distinguished North Carolinians." "Its object," said he, "was obvious; and to all acquainted with our peculiar position, our desponding and erroneous estimate of our resources, and the history of that singular and remarkable exodus or emigration which for years has retarded our progress in every species of improvement, the uses of such a work, well compiled, were fully apparent."<sup>1</sup> He had begun the readers before his elevation to the superintendency of the common schools, but upon assuming the duties of his office he felt that he ought not to have any investment in school-books. He therefore made arrangements for Dr. F. M. Hubbard, Professor of English Literature in the State University, to complete the work, and sold the stereotype plates of his readers and all the copies on hand to A. S. Barnes & Company of New York at original cost. By this arrangement Dr. Wiley received nothing for his valuable copyright, no profit on his books and no pay for his work and expense, besides losing three years' interest on the original investment.<sup>2</sup> There was nothing ostentatious about this; it was done quietly, and solely that the books

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1. *Ibid*, 11.

2. *Ibid*, 26-27, 49-50.

might be more useful. The readers were received with every mark of approval.

By far the most important problem the superintendent was called upon to solve was the problem of supplying teachers. Dr. Wiley went about this matter with his usual energy and wisdom. As he stated it the problem was: "How were eight hundred to a thousand old-field school-teachers to be utilized in a system of one genius, one law, and one end, when to each his own school had long been the educational world, of which he was the center and sovereign?"<sup>1</sup> And how were the 1500 or 2000 new teachers needed to be supplied? He aimed ultimately at normal schools, but in the beginning these were out of the question. For the present the common schools must supply themselves. He considered that their ability to do that would be the best test by which to judge of their character and success. He devised a plan, simple but effective, by which teachers not only could be supplied, but also aroused to study and continuous self-improvement. In order to test the results of his plan, he sent to each chairman in the State a circular asking what had been his observation of it. Fifty-five answers were received. One said, "bad;" one said, "no change;" four were "in doubt, but hopeful;" forty-nine thought the plan "good." In this way pupils leaving the common schools could enter the ranks of the teachers and gradually work to the top. As a result of his plan, Dr. Wiley asserted with some pride that those who now became teachers, sought places in the public

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1. Weeks: *Beginning of the Common School System in the South*, 1436.

schools in preference to conducting private schools, though formerly the reverse had been true.

But it was not enough simply to supply the demand for teachers; it was equally essential that a constant pressure be brought to bear on them for improvement. Besides the annual examinations, Dr. Wiley conceived and put into execution three other schemes: the establishment of a Teachers' Library Association in each school district; the publication of the *North Carolina School Journal*; and the organization of the Educational Association of North Carolina.<sup>1</sup>

Through the Teachers' Library Association, the teachers of the common schools were supplied with professional literature, for Dr. Wiley constantly urged upon them the necessity of studying their profession. He himself set the example. His words are as true now as they were then, when he said: "Scatter judiciously over the State good copies of any good work on education and it will create a revolution."<sup>2</sup>

The superintendent constantly felt the need of an organ of communication between the various educational forces of the State. To serve this purpose, he turned over in his mind plans for the establishment of an educational journal. The first number appeared in 1856, under the name of the *North Carolina Common School Journal*. It was to be issued quarterly from Greensboro. After an existence of two years, during which time it was kept alive only by Dr. Wiley's unlimited zeal and energy, it was adopted as the official organ of the North Carolina

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1. Ibid, 1447-52.

2. Report of 1854. 44. Leg. Doc. 1854-55.

Teachers' Association; its name was changed to the *North Carolina Journal of Education*, and Dr. Wiley was elected editor-in-chief, assisted by fourteen associate-editors. The list of subscribers was small and the financial difficulties great, yet the journal took and kept a high place among its contemporaries. Though the war soon forced half of its exchanges to suspend publication and though the difficulty in getting paper increased daily, the journal held its own until 1864. In March of that year, the printing establishment of Campbell & Allbright, from which the journal was issued, was destroyed by fire, and along with it the journal fell. Its influence for good in North Carolina was beyond calculation.

The same year in which the journal was established witnessed another of Dr. Wiley's triumphs. Numerous efforts had previously been made in the State to organize a teachers' association, but all had failed ignominiously. On one occasion the meeting had been widely advertised, and on the appointed day one teacher appeared. However, Dr. Wiley was a courageous man and was not to be daunted by the failure of others. In October, 1856, at Salisbury, he succeeded, after strenuous efforts, in organizing the educational forces of the State into a Teachers' Association. Six other meetings followed, all of them well attended, not only by men prominent in educational work, but also by many prominent in the other professions and in business life. The Association was on the high road to greater usefulness when it fell to pieces amid the thunders of war. Dr. Wiley considered the *Journal of Education* and the Teachers' Association his two chief aids in promoting the common school system.



He labored long and faithfully; he met and overcame almost insuperable difficulties; and he placed his State foremost among the States of the South in the education of her children. During the decade from 1850 to 1860, covering the period of Dr. Wiley's work, although the population of the State increased less than 14 per cent., the number of children in the common schools increased more than 36 per cent. In 1850 the percentage of illiteracy in the State among the voting population was 29.2; by 1860 this had been reduced to 23.1. In 1850 Dr. Wiley had been alarmed at the neglect of our wealth-producing resources. At the close of the decade he had ample grounds for declaring that a great revolution was silently going on in North Carolina. Dr. Wiley's fears for the future of the State had been aroused by the constant stream of emigration from her borders. By 1860 the outward current had been checked and an inflowing current started. The spirit of education was revealing itself in the industrial progress of the State; in the generally awakened confidence in her resources; and in the growing attachment for home. The blight which had fallen on North Carolina was about to vanish under the touch of his strong hand.<sup>1</sup>

Of the general success of the common school system in 1860, Wiley said:

"The educational system of North Carolina is now attracting the favorable attention of the States south, west, and north of us. . . . All modern statistical publications give us a rank far in advance of the position which we occupied in such works a

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1. See his Report for 1859. Leg. Dec.

few years ago; and without referring to numerous other facts equally significant, our moral influence may be illustrated by the fact that the superintendent of common schools was pressingly invited to visit, free of expense, the legislature of the most powerful State south of us (Georgia), to aid in preparing a system of public instruction similar to ours. He receives constant inquiries from abroad in regard to our plan; and beyond all doubt our schools, including those of all grades, are now the greatest temporal interest of the State. . . . North Carolina has the start of all her Southern sisters in educational matters. . . . If then she is true to herself, and justly comprehends the plain logic of the facts of her situation, she will now . . . prudently and courageously advance in the direction which leads alike to safety, to peace, and to prosperity. . . . Such action is not merely important as likely to lead to future greatness; it is also a defensive and imperative necessity of the present. If the Union remains, no one will deny the importance, to our peace as well as honor, of having a strong and prosperous State, able to command the respect of her confederates; if the Union is dissolved, then North Carolina is our only country for the present, and our present security and future hopes will depend on her power to stand alone or honorably to compete with rivals in a new confederacy."<sup>1</sup>

Whatever the success that had been attained was admitted by all to be due to the genius of Calvin H. Wiley. So universal was the confidence felt in his ability and integrity, that he numbered his sup-

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1. Report for 1860. Part II., 7-9.

porters in all ranks and conditions of life, in all religious denominations and in all political parties, and received hearty support from all. A Whig when elected by a Democratic legislature, he retained his party affiliations and voted according to his political convictions, and yet was continuously re-elected by a legislature generally Democratic at a time when party feeling ran high. On one occasion the Democrats in the legislature moved his election at the beginning of the session, in order to forestall the rise of party passion and the possibility of a Democratic opponent.

This confidence reflected no little credit on the Democratic Party, and the results showed that it was not misplaced. Dr. Wiley was met at the beginning of his work by six obstacles. He had found the people separated by their diversified characters and aspirations; he gave them a common interest and united them in a common effort to promote a common cause; he found them ignorant of the common school idea, he taught them by unanswerable example and filled their minds and hearts with knowledge of and pride in their educational system; he found them diffident of their ability to manage; he put them to the test and compelled their confidence in themselves and their schools; he found their minds filled with errors, he turned on them the light of knowledge and they vanished like mist before the sun; he found them indifferent, he roused their enthusiastic support; he found a vineyard without laborers, he created an army of devoted workers.

But with the outbreak of the war came the supreme test. North Carolina seceded from the Union

May 20, 1861. It became apparent from the first that an attack would be made upon the school fund for the purpose of converting it into revenue for the support of the war. Dr. Wiley was filled with great anxiety and began at once to prepare for the attack. He first sought the support of the county officials by issuing to them a very able circular, giving the arguments in favor of preserving the school fund intact for school purposes. His next step was to win the governor and his council. Previous to the meeting of the first war legislature, he appeared before them to present his case. His statement was able and his appeal eloquent. "No people," he exclaimed, "could or would be free who were unable or unwilling to educate their children;" and the fact that the State was waging a war for independence was an additional reason why the schools should be kept open. He cried out with indignation against those who were so short-sighted as to "think that a war for political, social, commercial and intellectual independence could be waged with better results by arresting or destroying all those springs of life on which national wealth and greatness are founded." The governor and the members of his council were completely won over, and entered into a solemn, though informal, covenant to support the superintendent in resisting any attack on the school fund. This agreement, he it said to Governor Ellis's credit, was faithfully kept, and the precedent thus set was followed by his successors.

Dr. Wiley was ably assisted in this work by the North Carolina Teachers' Association. In November, 1861, the association presented a memorial to the constitutional convention, then in session, pray-

ing that "by an amendment to the constitution the proceeds of the common school fund be sacredly and permanently secured to their original purposes."

It was well that the superintendent and the friends of education prepared their forces for attack. It came soon after the assembling of the Legislature. Both sides received able support. In the Senate, Governor John M. Morehead led the defense. Outside the work of Dr. Wiley was arduous, skilful and effective. Nothing shows better than this fight the strength of the system built up by Dr. Wiley. Its powerful aid was invoked and the bill providing for the use of the school fund for war purposes was defeated. When the Legislature adjourned, the battle was won, for succeeding Legislatures followed the example thus set and the school fund was unmolested.

And so the schools were kept open, but, of course, they felt the strain of war. From this time onward their existence was a struggle heroically maintained by the superintendent. The remarkable feature is not that the system became impaired, but that it did not fail altogether. That it did not do so was due to the energy and zeal of Calvin H. Wiley; he refused to yield to discouragements, but labored incessantly for the betterment of the system. While the country lay bleeding in the iron grip of war we find him planning a system of graded schools and actually getting a bill for their establishment through the House of Commons. It was also reported favorably by the Senate Committee, but had to be tabled, because of the pressure of more urgent business. The task before Dr. Wiley was more than human ability could cope with successfully. Diffi-

culties increased daily. The attention of the people was attracted from the ordinary affairs of life by the novelty and the suffering of war. Many thought it best to suspend the schools altogether. It was hard to get text-books. It was hard to get capable officials. It was hard to get teachers. In spite of all these difficulties, the report of 1863 shows 50,000 children in the common schools. Referring to this fact, Wiley says:

“The future historian of this stirring age will not fail to find evidences of the moral energy which this fact implies; for he will see that these schools had to be chiefly supplied with books written and printed in the State after the commencement of the revolution and in face of incredible difficulties, that they were all regularly visited by a State Journal of Education at a time when periodical literature was at a low ebb, and that educational associations still held their meetings, and still discussed plans for popular improvement.”<sup>1</sup>

“The present generation does not need to be told that it was hard to keep up a general educational system in any part of the Confederate States of America during the year 1863 . . . and it is, therefore, a subject of devout gratitude to me to be able to announce that our common schools still live and are still full of glorious promise. Through all this dark night of storm their cheerful radiance has been seen on every hill and in every valley of our dear old State; and while the whole continent reels with the shock of terrible and ruthless war, covering the face of nature with ruin and desolation,

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1. Report for 1863, 7 Leg. Doc. 1863.

there are here scattered through the wilderness, hundreds of humming hives, where thousands of youthful minds are busily learning those peaceful arts which, under the blessing of God, are to preserve our civilization and to aid in perpetuating the liberty and independence for which this generation is manfully contending. This prospect more than repays all the toils, anxieties, and vigils of those to whose keeping is committed the great moral trust; and if the labors, denials, and responsibilities of those who nurse our educational system are unnoticed in this stirring and martial age, they have in their own hearts a consolation infinitely more valuable than any reward the world can confer."<sup>1</sup>

But the end was drawing near. The distressing condition of the people and the depreciation of the currency made it almost impossible to continue the schools. Dr. Wiley never for an instant relaxed his energy, but the task was beyond the power of man, and with the close of the war the schools went down for lack of funds. The superintendent was in his office in the capitol when the surrender of General Joseph E. Johnston was announced to him, April 26, 1865. Even then he did not cease from his labors. He retained his office until October 19th, when by an ordinance of the constitutional convention all offices held on April 26, 1865, were declared vacant. And in 1866 the office of superintendent was abolished for the want of funds to meet the expenses.

With his going out of office Dr. Wiley closed his official connection with the common school system, though he never lost active interest in educational

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1. Ibid, 3-4.

matters. He had given the best years of his life to the cause, and surely no man ever laid down his work with a better right to the gratitude of contemporaries and of posterity.

After the close of the war a new system of public schools was built up in North Carolina upon the old foundation laid by Dr. Wiley. In 1876 he was asked to become the candidate for the superintendency of public instruction, but having recently been ordained as a minister of the gospel, he declined on the ground that his sacred calling prevented. He interested himself, however, in the establishment and organization of the city schools of Winston, where he made his home during the last years of his life. His voice and pen were given to the cause, and when established he was called to the chairmanship of the first Board of Commissioners. This place he held till his death, January 11, 1887.

The fame of his services is limited neither by State boundaries nor by the lapse of years. His reputation was national, and his school system was recognized as one of the best in the United States. At the National Convention of Educators held in Cincinnati in August, 1858, Dr. Wiley was on the program as "one of the distinguished educators who would address the convention" along with Horace Mann. He received an invitation to visit the Legislature of Georgia to aid in preparing a system of schools similar to those he had established in North Carolina. He could not go, and he was then urged to prepare an essay on the subject, to be read to the Legislature. The Boston (Massachusetts) Post of May 1, 1856, says that Dr. Wiley's report for 1855 is "written with ability and shows that Mr. Wiley has



largeness of views and a zeal and energy in the duties of his office which eminently fit him to fill the responsible position which he now occupies." Since his death, one of the school buildings in the city of Raleigh has been given his name. In the city of Winston the school children have erected a handsome monument to his memory, and but recently the thousands of school children of North Carolina, contributing each a penny, have presented to the State a handsome marble bust which will preserve his features for succeeding generations.

There have been greater men in the history of North Carolina than Calvin H. Wiley, men of more pre-eminent abilities, men of greater originality of thought, men of greater powers for arousing their fellow men; but there has been no man in our history who displayed a more unselfish devotion to a great cause, who advanced its interests with greater energy, or who achieved for it a more distinctive success, and no man who better deserves those evidences of approval and gratitude which mankind from the earliest dawn of history have erected in honor of the distinguished dead. I do not know how a man's work in the world is to be weighed and measured if it be not by its contributions to the sum total of those achievements which go to make up our civilization. If these contributions be for the permanent upbuilding of civilization, the work deserves to be called a great work, and the man who does it a useful man in his day and generation. Measured by these standards, are we not justified in giving Calvin H. Wiley a foremost place among the "Ante-Bellum Builders of North Carolina?"

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## John Motley Morehead<sup>1</sup>

Along the line of the North Carolina Railroad, from its eastern terminus at Goldsboro to its western terminus at Charlotte, lie eleven counties embracing six thousand square miles of territory, now one of the most prosperous and productive regions in North Carolina. During the decade from 1840 to 1850, perhaps no other State on the entire Atlantic seaboard could have exhibited a stretch of country of equal area which presented to the patriotic citizen so discouraging a prospect or so hopeless an outlook. Such a citizen traversing this region would have found public roads and methods of travel and transportation that were primitive when George III. claimed the allegiance of the American colonies. Delays, inconveniences, and discomforts were the least of the evils that beset the traveler who en-

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1. See also Connor, R. D. W.: "John Motley Morehead; Architect and Builder of Public Works." Publications of the North Carolina Historical Commission, Bulletin No. 12. Smith, C. Alphonso: "John Motley Morehead," *Biog. Hist. of N. C.* II, 250-59, also printed in *South Atlantic Quarterly*, V. I. Kerr, John: "Oration on the Life and Character of John M. Morehead;" In *Memoriam of John M. Morehead*, Raleigh, 1868; Scott, William Lafayette: "Tribute to the Genius and Worth of John M. Morehead," *Ibid.* Wooten, Council, "Governor Morehead," *Charlotte Daily Observer*, Sept. 30, 1901.

trusted life and limbs to the public conveyances of that period. The cost of transportation was so great that the profits of one-half the planters' crops were consumed in getting the other half to market, and hundreds of them found it profitless to produce more than their own families could use. In 1853 a traveler, within thirty miles of the State Capitol, saw "three thousand barrels of an article worth a dollar and a half a barrel in New York, thrown away, a mere heap of useless offal, because it would cost more to transport it than it would be worth."<sup>1</sup>

Under such conditions there could be, of course, no commerce, and without commerce no markets. Such commerce as the produce of the fertile valleys and plateaus of the Piedmont section created found its way to the markets of Virginia and South Carolina; and among the people who dwelt west of Greensboro, declared Governor Morehead in 1842, "Cheraw, Camden, Columbia, . . . Augusta, and Charleston are much more familiarly known than even Fayetteville and Raleigh."<sup>2</sup> In all the region from Goldsboro to Charlotte, Raleigh, then a straggling country village, was the only town of sufficient importance to be noted in the United States census of 1850. This section, now the heart of the manufacturing region of the South, reported to the census takers of that year no other manufactures than a handful of "homemade" articles valued at \$396,473. The social and labor systems upon which the civilization of the State was founded confined the

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1. Olmsted: *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States, 1853-1854*, I., 369.

2. *Annual Message to the Legislature. Journal, 1842-43*, 409.

energies of the people almost exclusively to agriculture, yet their farming operations were so crude and unproductive that a traveler, commenting on the agriculture in the vicinity of Raleigh, found it "a mystery how a town of 2,500 inhabitants can obtain sufficient supplies from it to exist."<sup>1</sup> This was not the view merely of an unsympathetic stranger. Calvin H. Wiley, attempting to arouse his fellow members of the Legislature of 1852 from their indifference and lethargy, after referring to the "magnificent capitol" in which they sat, exclaimed, "But what is the view from these porticoes, and what do we see as we travel hither? Wasted fields and decaying tenements; long stretches of silent desolation with here and there a rudely cultivated farm and a tottering barn."<sup>2</sup>

Such was the view which Central North Carolina presented to the keen eyes of John M. Morehead when, in the closing days of 1840, he journeyed from Greensboro to Raleigh to assume his duties and responsibilities as Chief Magistrate of the Commonwealth. As desolate as the prospect was, however, Morehead's foresight saw in it not a little to give him courage. He must have realized that North Carolina was standing at the turn of the road and that much depended on the wisdom and prudence with which he himself directed her choice of future routes. Four years before a new Constitution, profoundly affecting the political life of the State, had gone into operation, from which Morehead, and

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1. Olmsted: *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, I, 357.  
2. Speech in support of his Bill to create the office of Superintendent of Common Schools.

other leaders who thought as he did, had prophesied great results for the upbuilding of the State. This new Constitution had paved the way for the work of a small group of constructive statesmen, of whom Morehead was now the chosen leader, who were destined to direct and lead the public thought of North Carolina during the quarter century from 1835 to 1860.

Among these men two distinct types of genius were represented. On the one hand there were the dreamers—men who, like Archibald D. Murphey, had the power of vision to see what the future held in store for their country, who wrote and spoke forcibly of what they foresaw, but lacked the power to convince men of the practicability of their visions. On the other hand there were the so-called practical men—men who knew well enough how to construct what other men had planned, but lacked the power of vision necessary to see beyond the common everyday affairs that surrounded and engrossed them. Once in an age appears that rare individual, both architect and contractor, both poet and man of action, to whom is given both the power to dream and the power to execute. Such men write themselves deep in their country's annals and make the epochs of history.

In the history of North Carolina such a man was John M. Morehead. Those who have written and spoken of Governor Morehead heretofore have been chiefly impressed with his great practical wisdom, and this he certainly had as much as any other man in our history. As for myself, what most impresses me after a careful study of his life and works, is his

wonderful power of vision. He was our most visionary builder, our greatest practical dreamer. No other man of his day had so clear a vision of the future to which North Carolina was destined, or did so much to bring about its realization as Governor Morehead. It is no exaggeration to say that we have not now in process of construction, and have not had since his day, a single great work of internal improvement of which he did not dream and for which he did not labor. He dreamed of great lines of railroad binding together not only all sections of North Carolina, but connecting this State with every part of the American Union. He dreamed of a network of improved country roads leading from every farm in the State to all her markets. He dreamed of a great central highway, fed by these roads, finding its origin in the waters of the Atlantic at Morehead City and finally losing itself in the clouds that hang about the crests of the Blue Ridge. He dreamed of the day when the channels of our rivers would be so deepened and widened that they could bear upon their waters our share of the commerce of the world. He dreamed of an inland waterway connecting the harbor of Beaufort with the waters of Pamlico Sound and through the opening of Roanoke Inlet, affording a safe inland passage for coastwise vessels around the whitecaps of Cape Hatteras. He dreamed of the day when the flags of all nations might be seen floating from the masts of their fleets riding at anchor in the harbors of Beaufort and Wilmington. He dreamed of a chain of mills and factories dotting every river-bank in the State and distributing over these highways

of commerce a variety of products bearing the brand of North Carolina manufacturers.<sup>1</sup>

Such were his dreams, and the history of North Carolina during the last half-century is largely the story of their realization. It is this fact that gives to Morehead his unique place in our history. He had a distinguished political career, but his fame is not the fame of the office holder. Indeed, no other man in our history, save Charles B. Aycock alone, in so brief a public career, made so deep an impression on the life of the State. The explanation is simple. The public service of each was inspired by a genuine love of the State and consecrated to the accomplishment of a great purpose. The educational and intellectual development which Aycock stimulated was based on the material prosperity of which Morehead laid the foundations. It is, then, his service as architect and builder of great and enduring public works that gives to Morehead his distinctive place in our annals, and it is of this service that I shall speak today.

The simple facts of Morehead's life may be quickly disposed of. He was born in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, July 4, 1796, son of John Morehead and Obedience Motley. In 1798 his parents moved to Rockingham County, North Carolina, where John grew to manhood. He was prepared for college partly under the private instruction of Thomas Settle and partly at the Academy of Dr. David Caldwell, near Greensboro. He afterwards entered the University of North Carolina, from which he was

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1. See his messages to the Legislature and other public addresses.

graduated in 1817. In his junior year he was appointed a tutor in the University. From 1828 to 1866 he served on the Board of Trustees, and in 1849 was President of the Alumni Association. Morehead was the sixth alumnus of the University to become Governor of North Carolina. After his graduation from the University he studied law under Archibald D. Murphey. In 1819, receiving his license to practice, he settled at Wentworth, county seat of Rockingham County, where he lived until his marriage to Miss Ann Eliza Lindsay, eldest daughter of Col. Robert Lindsay, of Guilford County. He then removed to Greensboro which continued to be his home during the rest of his life.

In 1821 he represented Rockingham County in the House of Commons; in 1826, 1827 and 1858 he represented Guilford County in the House, and in 1860 in the Senate. He was one of the delegates from Guilford in the Convention of 1835. In 1840 he was elected Governor, and in 1842 was re-elected. He was the permanent presiding officer of the National Whig Convention, which met at Philadelphia, June 7, 1848, and nominated General Zachary Taylor for the Presidency. By the act establishing the North Carolina Insane Asylum he was designated as Chairman of the Board of Commissioners to locate and build the asylum. In 1857 he was elected President of the association organized for the purpose of erecting at Greensboro a monument to General Nathanael Greene. He was one of the delegates from North Carolina to the Peace Congress at Washington in 1861. In 1861-'62 he was a member of the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States. He died at Greensboro, August 27, 1866.



When Morehead began his public career the prevailing political thought of the State was, in modern political vernacular, reactionary. Representation, as we have seen, was distributed equally among the counties, regardless of population. East of Raleigh, where the institution of slavery was most strongly entrenched, thirty-five counties with a combined population of 294,312, sent to the General Assembly sixteen more Commoners and eight more senators than twenty-seven counties west of Raleigh which had a combined population of 50,205 more people. A property qualification was requisite for membership in the General Assembly and inasmuch as all State officials were elected by the Legislature, not by the people directly, Property, not Men, controlled the government. The theory of Property was that the best government is that which governs least. Adherents of this school of politics thought, therefore, that government had fulfilled its mission when it had preserved order, punished crime, and kept down the rate of taxation. But another school of political thought, originating in the counties west of Raleigh, where the institution of slavery had not secured so strong a foothold, was now beginning to make itself heard. Its adherents favored a constitutional convention to revise the basis of representation, to give to the people the right to elect their chief magistrates, and in other respects to make the government popular in practice as well as in form; and they advocated internal improvements, geological surveys, the conservation of resources, asylums for the insane, public schools, schools for the deaf and dumb and for the blind, and numerous other progressive measures which all

right thinking people now acknowledge to be governmental in their nature. These men were the Progressives of their day.

Morehead found his place among these Progressives. As a member of the General Assembly he was among the foremost in advocating a constitutional convention. He supported measures for the building of good roads, for the digging of canals, for the improvement of inland navigation, for drainage of swamps, and for railroad surveys.<sup>1</sup> He opposed a bill to prevent the education of negroes, moved the appointment of a select committee on the colonization of slaves, introduced a bill providing for their emancipation under certain conditions, and displayed so much interest in measures for the amelioration of the conditions of the slaves that his opponents, when he became a candidate for Governor, charged him with being at heart an Abolitionist.<sup>2</sup> He endeavored to secure the appropriation of funds to enable Murphey to make his collection of material for the preservation of the history of North Carolina and took a deep interest in all measures for the

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1. In the Legislature of 1821 he voted with the minority for a resolution providing for a Constitutional Convention; for a bill "to provide an additional fund for internal improvements;" in 1826 for a bill to improve the navigation of the Cape Fear below Wilmington, and for a similar bill in 1827, for the survey of a route for a railroad from New Bern through Raleigh to the western counties.
  2. The Raleigh Standard called him an Abolitionist because as a member of the Legislature he "drew a report against the proposition of Mr. Stedman, from Chatham, forbidding the instruction of slaves." Quoted in the Raleigh Register, Jan. 3, 1840.

promotion of public education.<sup>3</sup> In 1827, while he was chairman of the Committee on Education, a bill came before his committee to repeal the Act of 1825 which had created the Literary Fund "for the establishment of common schools." Morehead submitted the report of the committee, in which he said :

"Your committee believe that the passage of that act [to establish common schools] must have been greeted by every philanthropist and friend of civil liberty as the foundation on which was to rest the future happiness of our citizens and the perpetuity of our political institutions. . . . From the very nature of our civil institutions, the people must act; it is wisdom and policy to teach them to act from the lights of reason, and not from the blind impulse of deluded feeling. . . . Independent of any political influences that general education might have, your committee are of the opinion that any State or sovereign, having the means at command, are morally criminal if they neglect to contribute to each citizen or subject that individual usefulness and happiness which arises from a well cultured understanding. . . . Your committee cannot conceive a nobler idea than that of the genius of our country, hovering over the tattered son of some miserable hovel, leading his infant but gigantic mind in the paths of useful knowledge, and pointing out to his noble ambition the open way by which talented merit may

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3. He introduced a resolution to advance money from the Literary Fund to be used "in aiding Archibald D. Murphey, of Orange County, in writing and publishing the History of this State."

reach the highest honors and preferments of our government.”

The committee, accordingly, unanimously recommended the rejection of the bill to discontinue the Literary Fund.<sup>1</sup> The recommendation was accepted, the bill was lost, the Literary Fund was saved, and the foundation upon which our common school system was afterwards built was preserved intact.

In the Convention of 1835, in which he represented Guilford County, Morehead supported the amendments offered to the Constitution designed to democratize the State Government. Two of these amendments in particular have had a far-reaching influence on our history. One of them placed representation in the House of Commons on a basis of Federal population; the other took away from the Legislature the election of the Governor and gave it to the people. To this latter change we may trace the origin of two of the most important political institutions of our own day—the party State Convention and the pre-election canvass of the State by the nominees for State offices.

The first party State Convention ever held in North Carolina was the Whig Convention which met in Raleigh, November 12, 1839, and nominated

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1. Coon: *Public Education in North Carolina, 1790-1840*, I., 376.

John M. Morehead for Governor.<sup>1</sup> There was a marked contrast between this convention and the last political convention held in North Carolina.<sup>2</sup> They were typical of the political conditions of the two eras in which they were held. The latter with its more than one thousand cheering, shouting, declaiming delegates, uncontrolled and uncontrollable, was truly representative of the aggressive direct democracy of the twentieth century. The former

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1. Ex-Gov. John Owen, delegate from Bladen, presided. A "General Committee of Thirteen," one from each Congressional District, was appointed "to take into consideration the purposes for which the Convention had assembled" and to report thereon. November 13th, this Committee reported, among other resolutions, the following: "Resolved, That having been inspired with a deep and lively sense of the eminent practical vigor, sound Republican principles, unblemished public and private virtues, ardent patriotism and decided abilities of John M. Morehead, of the County of Guilford, we do accordingly recommend him to our fellow citizens as a fit successor to our present enlightened Chief Magistrate, Governor Dudley."—Adopted unanimously. The platform of the Convention favored: (1) Economy in government; (2) Reform in the revenue system; (3) Reduction in the number of government employees; (4) Selection of government employees "without discrimination of parties;" (5) An amendment to the Federal Constitution to abolish the Electoral College; (6) One term of four years for the President; (7) A National Bank; (8) A division of the proceeds of public lands among the States on a basis of Federal population; (9) Public Education; (10) Strict Construction of the Constitution. It opposed: (1) Jackson's Spoil System; (2) Appointment of members of Congress to Federal offices during their terms in Congress; (3) Making judicial appointments for partisan reasons; (4) Interference of Federal Officers in elections; (5) Protective tariff; (6) The Federal Government's making internal improvements "except such as may be stamp with the national character;" (7) The Sub-Treasury Scheme; (8) Federal interference with slavery.

2. Reference is to the State Democratic Convention of 1912.

with its ninety-one sober, orderly, deliberative gentlemen of the old school, thoroughly responsive to the mallet of their chairman, was just as truly representative of the staid, self-restrained, representative democracy of the early nineteenth century.

Morehead's election as Governor followed a campaign that is memorable in the history of North Carolina as the first in which candidates for public office ever made a canvass of the State. But in other respects also his election and inauguration as Chief Executive marks a turning point in our history. He was the first governor to sit in the present State Capitol, in itself typical of the new era then dawning upon the State; and, what is more important still, he was among the first of our Governors to discard the old *laissez faire* policy which his predecessors had followed since the Revolution, and to come into office with a distinct program in view. This program he outlined in very general terms in his Inaugural Address before the members of the General Assembly, in the course of which he said:

"I shall be happy to co-operate with you in bringing into active operation all the elements of greatness and usefulness with which our State is so abundantly blessed. Other states have outstripped us in the career of improvements, and in the development of their natural resources, but North Carolina will stand a favorable comparison with most of her sister states in her natural advantages—her great extent of fertile soil, her great variety of production, her exhaustless deposits of mineral wealth, her extraordinary water-power, inviting to manufacturers, all, all combine to give her advantages that few other states possess. Whatever measures you may

adopt to encourage agriculture and to induce the husbandman while he toils and sweats to hope that his labors will be duly rewarded; whatever measures you may adopt to facilitate commerce and to aid industry in all departments of life to reap its full rewards, will meet with my cordial approbation. . . . It is equally our duty, fellow citizens, to attend to our moral and intellectual cultivation. . . . It is to our common schools, in which every child can receive the rudiments of an education, that our attention should be mainly directed. Our system is yet in its infancy; it will require time and experience to give to it its greatest perfection. . . . I doubt not, in due time, the legislative wisdom of the State will perfect the system as far as human sagacity can do it. And no part of my official duty will be performed with more pleasure than that part which may aid in bringing about that happy result."<sup>1</sup>

But we should not expect a man of Governor Morehead's great practical wisdom to content himself with general observations. To reduce these general observations into a concrete, practical system was the work of his first two years in the Governor's office, and when the Legislature of 1842 met he was ready with a message outlining a complete system of internal improvements.<sup>2</sup> His scheme embraced the further extension of the railroad lines already built in the State, the improvement of our rivers and harbors, the construction of extensive lines of turnpikes, and the linking of all three together in one general system of transportation. One of the

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1. Raleigh Register, Jan. 5, 1841.

2. Journals of Legislature, 1842-43, pp. 405-22; Also Public Documents, 1842-43, Doc. No. 1.

ablest public documents in our history, this message, for its practical bearing on the problems of our own day, still repays a careful study. With reference to the great inland waterway now nearing completion, of which the connection between Pamlico Sound and Beaufort Harbor forms an important link, he said:

“Turning our attention to the eastern part of the State, two improvements said to be practicable, assume an importance that renders them national in their character. I allude to the opening of Roanoke Inlet and the connection of Pamlico Sound by a ship canal with Beaufort harbor. Frequent surveys of the first of these proposed improvements . . . establishes the feasibility of this work. The advantages arising from this improvement to our commerce are too obvious to need pointing out. But the view to be taken of its vast importance is in the protection it will afford to our shipping and the lives of our seamen. The difficulty and dangers so often encountered at Ocracoke Inlet render the connection between Pamlico Sound and Beaufort harbor of vast importance to the convenience and security of our commerce and shipping. It will be an extension of that inland navigation, so essential to us in time of war, and give access to one of the safest harbors on our coast, and one from which a vessel can be quicker at sea than from any other, perhaps, on the continent. In these improvements the commerce of the nation is interested; it becomes the duty of the nation to make them, if they be practicable and proper. I therefore recommend that you bring the attention of Congress to the subject in the manner most likely to effect the object. . . . We should assert a continual claim to our right to have this work effected by the



general government. . . . You would be saved the trouble of this appeal if the nation could witness one of those storms so frequent on our coast—could witness the war of elements which rage around Hatteras and the dangers which dance about Ocracoke—could witness the noble daring of our pilots and the ineffectual but manly struggles of our seamen—could see our coast fringed with wrecks and our towns filled with the widows and orphans of our gallant tars. Justice and humanity would extort what we now ask in vain.”

Of the conditions of transportation and travel in the central section of the State, he said:

“I would respectfully invite your attention to the public highways generally. . . . From Fayetteville, the highest point of good navigation, westward to the Buncombe Turnpike, a distance of some two hundred and fifty or three hundred miles, what navigable stream, railroad, turnpike, or macadamized highway gives to the laborer facilities of transportation? None! Literally none! This vast extent of territory, reaching from the Blue Ridge in the west to the alluvial region in the east, and extending across the whole State, it is believed, will compare with any spot upon the globe for the fertility of its soil, the variety of its productions, the salubrity of its climate, the beauty of its landscapes, the richness of its mines, the facilities for manufactures and the intelligence and moral worth of its population. Can another such territory, combining all these advantages, be found upon the face of the whole earth, so wholly destitute of natural or artificial facilities for transportation?

“What scheme, that is practicable,” he asked, “will afford the desired facilities?” And in answer to this query he made two recommendations.

“The remedy for these evils is believed to be in good turnpikes. . . . I therefore recommend that a charter be granted to make a turnpike road from the city of Raleigh to some point westward selected with a view to its ultimate continuance to the extreme west. . . . Should this road be continued to Waynesboro [now Goldsboro], which might be done at comparatively small expense, the farmer would have the choice of markets, of Wilmington by the railroad, or New Bern by the river Neuse.”

Further he recommended:

“That a charter be granted to make a turnpike from Fayetteville to the Yadkin River at some point above the Narrows, or, if deemed more expedient, to some point on a similar road leading from Raleigh westward, thus giving the west the advantages of both markets. . . . Should this road ever reach the Yadkin, no doubt is entertained of its continuance across the Catawba westward—thus giving to this road the advantages which will arise from the navigation of these two noble rivers.”

Nearly seventy years were to pass before the State was ready for the execution of these plans, and it was left for the engineers of 1912 to realize what the statesman of 1812 had dreamed. A vaster work was waiting the constructive genius of Morehead.

Turing his eyes further westward, Governor Morehead foresaw the future development of the mountainous section of North Carolina. To make this region more interesting, he declared, we have only to make it more accessible, and continuing he said:

“The sublimity and beauty of its mountain scenery, the purity of its waters, the buoyancy and salubrity of its atmosphere, the fertility of its valleys, the verdure of its mountains, and, above all, its energetic, intelligent and hospitable inhabitants, make it an inviting portion of the State. . . . When good roads shall be established in that region, it is believed the population will increase with rapidity, agriculture improve, grazing will be extended, and manufactures and the mechanic arts will flourish in a location combining so many advantages and inviting their growth. The improved highways will be additional inducements to the citizens of other sections of our State to abandon their usual northern tours, or visits to the Virginia watering places, for a tour more interesting among our own mountains, much cheaper, and much more beautiful—a tour in which they will inspire health in every breath and drink in health at every draught.”

Governor Morehead did not expect, indeed he did not desire that the General Assembly should proceed to put all of his recommendations into immediate effect. He realized only too well that such a procedure would require enormous outlays far beyond the resources of the State, and he never forgot that debts contracted today must be paid tomorrow. Sufficient warning of the effects of such a course was not lacking. Many of the Southern and Western States embarking in wild and extravagant schemes of internal improvements had made such vast expenditures that their treasuries had become bankrupt and their people oppressed with obligations which they could not meet; and to extricate themselves they had resorted to the very simple but very

effective means of repudiation. If Governor Morehead loved progress much, he detested repudiation more; and the most vigorous passage in his message is that in which he warns the Legislature against such a course. Said he:

“I would recommend that whatever schemes of expenditure you may embark in, you keep within the means at the command of the State; otherwise the people must be taxed more heavily or the State must contract a loan. The pressure of the times forbids the former—the tarnished honor of some of the States should make us, for the present, decline the latter. . . . North Carolina has been jeered for sluggishness and indolence, because she has chosen to guard her treasury and protect her honor by avoiding debt and promptly meeting her engagements. She has yielded to others the glory of their magnificent expenditures and will yield to them all that glory which will arise from a repudiation of their contracts. In the language of one of her noblest sons, ‘It is better for her to sleep on in indolence and innocence than to wake up in infamy and treason.’”

The schemes outlined in Morehead’s message of 1842 were laid before a Legislature controlled by the Democratic party, and the policy of that party was hostile to internal improvements. Morehead accordingly was forced to wait upon events for the consummation of his great schemes. In outlining these schemes he had given evidence of his extraordinary power of vision; the next few years were to bring him an opportunity to demonstrate his ability to transform his dreams into actual realities. This opportunity, for which he had so long waited, came

with the passage by the Legislature of 1849 of the act to charter "The North Carolina Railroad Company." The history of this measure—the long and bitter contest between the East and the West over the proposed railroad from Charlotte to Danville, the statesmanlike compromise of its advocates in accepting the road from Charlotte to Goldsboro, the prolonged struggle and ultimate victory in the House of Commons, the dramatic scene in the Senate wherein Calvin Graves immolated his own personal ambition on the altar of public duty—all this has been described so often that it is not necessary to repeat the story here. The act authorized the organization of a corporation with stock of \$3,000,000, of which the State was to take \$2,000,000 when private individuals had subscribed \$1,000,000 and actually paid in \$500,000. North Carolina had long stood at the turn of the road hesitatingly. By the passage of this act she finally made her decision. The enthusiasm of Governor Morehead, who was not usually given to picturesque language, was too great for plain speech. "The passage of the act," he declared, "under which this company is organized was the dawning hope to North Carolina; the securing its charter was the rising sun of that hope; the completion of the road will be the meridian glory of that hope, pregnant with the results that none living can divine."<sup>1</sup>

For the next five years, during which the private subscription of \$1,000,000 was secured, the charter obtained, the company organized, the route surveyed, and the road constructed, the dominant figure

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1. Report of the Directors of the North Carolina Railroad Co., Leg. Doc. 1850-51, Doc. No. 9.

in its history is the figure of John M. Morehead. In this period he performed his greatest service to the State and enrolled his name permanently among the builders of the Commonwealth. The experience of North Carolina in railroad building up to that time had not been encouraging. Both the Wilmington and Weldon and the Raleigh and Gaston railroads were bankrupt for the want of patronage. In the face of this fact, it was no slight achievement to raise a million dollars in North Carolina for another similar enterprise. Yet this is the task to which Governor Morehead now set himself. On June 15, 1849, he presided over a great Internal Improvements Convention at Salisbury at which measures largely suggested by himself, were adopted for securing subscriptions to the stock.<sup>1</sup> Placed by this convention at the head of an executive committee to carry out these measures, he pushed them with a vigor, determination, and wisdom that aroused the enthusiasm of the whole State and inspired confidence in the enterprise. Speaking of his work at a convention held in Greensboro, November 30, 1849, in the interest of the road, the Greensboro *Patriot* declared that "the determined spirit of this distinguished gentleman touched every heart in that assembly and awoke a feeling of enthusiasm and anxiety, deep, startling, and fervent as we have ever witnessed."<sup>2</sup> On March 6, 1850, Morehead was able to announce to a convention at Hillsboro that only

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1. Raleigh Register, June 23, 1849. Similar conventions were held at Greensboro, Nov. 29, 1849; Raleigh Dec. 15, 1849; Goldsboro in January, 1850; and Hillsboro in March, 1850.

2. Quoted in the Raleigh Star, Dec. 5, 1849.

\$100,000 remained to be taken to complete the private subscription, and then announced his willingness to be one of ten men to take the balance. Nine others promptly came forward, subscribed their proportionate part, and thus ensured the building of the road.<sup>1</sup> "It is worthy of remark," declared Major Walter Gwynn, the eminent engineer whose skill contributed so much to the construction of the road, "that the whole amount was subscribed by individuals, without aid of corporations, the largest subscription thus made to any public improvement in the Southern country." The editor of the *Raleigh Star*, announced the completion of the private subscription with the following comments:

"We must be permitted to remark that the State owes much to that sterling man, Governor Morehead, for success in this enterprise; and that he who has heretofore been styled "wheel horse" in this matter, may be justly entitled to the appellation of a "whole team." Whilst we pen these hasty lines, the deep-mouthed cannon is pealing forth from Union Square commemorative of this great deed for North Carolina. We are not of a very excitable disposition, but we must confess that it makes our blood run quicker at every peal, so that we can scarcely restrain ourselves from responding to its notes, "Huzza! Huzza! for the railroad."<sup>2</sup>

On July 11, 1850, the private stockholders met at Salisbury and organized the company. The board of directors unanimously elected John M. Morehead president. He was continuously re-elected president

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1. *Raleigh Star*, March 20, 1850.

2. *Raleigh Star*, March 6, 1850.

until 1855, when declining further election he was succeeded by Charles F. Fisher. During these five years of President Morehead's administration the North Carolina Railroad, truly described as "the greatest of all enterprises so far attempted by the State of North Carolina in the nature of a public or internal improvement," was constructed and opened to traffic. The surveys were commenced August 21, 1850; on July 11, 1851, at Greensboro, in the presence of an immense throng, ground for the laying of the rails was broken;<sup>1</sup> on January 29, 1856, the road was ready for cars from Goldsboro to Charlotte, a distance of two hundred and twenty-three miles. In his last report to the board of directors, Engineer Gwynn said that the breaking of ground for this railroad "may be justly regarded as an event which will ever be memorable in the annals of North Carolina—an era which marks her engaging with earnestness in honorable competition with her sister states in the great work of internal improvement which is to raise the State to that rank which the advantages of her situation entitle her to hold," and continuing, he said:

"From this memorable day, July 11, 1851, there has been no faltering or despondency; all have been united heart and hand in the great undertaking; the whole State, her entire people, catching the enthusiasm which it engendered, have come forth in their might and majesty battling in the cause of internal improvements, those heretofore signalized as laggards now pressing forward in the front rank. . . . The contractors on the North Carolina Railroad

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1. For an interesting account of this ceremony see Raleigh Register, July 16, 1851.



were all stockholders, and with only two or three exceptions entirely destitute of experience in the work they undertook; they commenced their contracts very generally in January, 1852, and on the first of January, 1853, without the aid of a single dollar from the treasury of the company, but relying entirely upon their own credit and means, their united labor amounted to \$500,000, which, carried to the credit of their stock subscription, fulfilled the second condition of the subscription on the part of the State and brought her in as a partner in the great enterprise. This (coupling the subscription of a million dollars by individuals, chiefly farmers, and working out a half million on their own resources) is an achievement unprecedented in the annals of the public works of this or any other country, and wherever known (and it ought to be published everywhere) will disabuse the public mind and vindicate the energy, enterprise and industry of the citizens of the State. I have repeatedly said publicly, and perceiving no impropriety in it, I avail myself of this occasion to say that in my experience, now exceeding thirty years, I have not found on any public work with which I have been connected, a set of contractors more reliable than those with whom I have had to deal on the North Carolina Railroad, and none with whom my intercourse has been so pleasant and agreeable."

It is no small tribute to the wisdom and constructive genius of President Morehead to be able to say that, of all the contracts which, as president of the road, he had to make, the only one about which any controversy ever arose, or any charge of favoritism was ever made, was one which the State Directors,

for partisan political purposes, took out of his hands and referred for settlement to a committee of their own choosing.

This controversy was an incident in one of the most memorable events in Governor Morehead's career. Before the passage of the act to charter the North Carolina Railroad Company, the people of the central section of the State had asked the Legislature to charter a company to build a railroad from Charlotte to Danville, Va. The people of the East opposed this charter, and in 1849 its advocates accepted in its place the railroad from Charlotte to Goldsboro. Nearly ten years passed, therefore, before anything more was heard of the Danville connection. In 1858 the advocates of the Danville connection again brought forward their scheme, and asked for a charter for a company to build a road, without any aid from the State, to connect the North Carolina Railroad at Greensboro with the Richmond and Danville at Danville. The bill was introduced in the House of Commons in 1858 by Francis L. Simpson, of Rockingham, but everybody understood that it was in reality Governor Morehead's bill and he was its principal champion. The members from the East, supported by the *Raleigh Register* and the *Raleigh Standard*, immediately assailed the project as inimical to the interests of the North Carolina Railroad. The debate continued several days. It was participated in by several of the ablest debaters in the State, and was extended to embrace the whole subject and history of the State's policy toward railroads. Governor Morehead's administration of the affairs of the North Carolina Railroad was bitterly assailed. He was charged with mismanagement and

with a breach of faith and betrayal of the interests of the State, his opponents claiming that, while soliciting subscriptions to stock in the North Carolina Railroad Company, he had expressly promised to abandon forever all advocacy of the Danville connection. No more formidable attack, perhaps, has ever been made on any public man in the history of North Carolina. Arrayed against him, besides the two newspapers mentioned, were Robert R. Bridgers, of Edgecombe; W. T. Dortch, of Wayne; Pride Jones and John W. Norwood, of Orange, and Dennis D. Ferebee, of Camden, and others scarcely less distinguished for ability. Morehead's defence is still remembered as one of the really great forensic triumphs in our history. Mr. J. S. F. Baird, who represented Buncombe county in that Legislature, and who was not of Governor Morehead's political faith, under date of April 29, 1912, writes of the contest:

"After the lapse of fifty-four years it is impossible for me to recall many of the incidents of the debate, but this much I do remember, that Colonel Bridgers' attack on Governor Morehead was futile and did the Governor no harm, for he vindicated himself in the most thorough manner."

Two other members who themselves participated in the debate have left their testimony. John Kerr, of Rockingham county, said of Morehead's defence:

"Never was a more brilliant victory won than he achieved that day. His assailants were driven from all their positions, were pursued and routed, 'horse, foot and dragoons.' . . . They were *strong men* and the House felt the shock of battle while the conflict lasted. But when he closed his defence his assailants bore the air of deep dejection and discomfiture.

The House was enraptured with the display of power on the part of Governor Morehead, and no further charges were heard against him." Hon. Thomas Settle said: "For a time the attack seemed overwhelming, and Governor Morehead's friends feared that he would not be able to repel it. For five days he sat and received it in silence, but when he arose and as he proceeded with his defence, friend, foe, and everybody else was struck with amazement. We could scarcely realize that any man possessed such powers of argument and eloquence. His vindication was so complete that his assailants openly acknowledged it." Mr. C. S. Wooten, who did not hear the debate but remembers the impression it created in the State at the time, says of Morehead's effort: "I know of but one other instance in American history that can parallel Morehead's fight and that was when Benton, solitary and alone, made his fight against Calhoun, Clay and Webster in favor of his resolution expunging from the records of the Senate the resolution censuring General Jackson. There never has been such another instance in the history of the State of such moral courage, such heroic firmness, and such a grand exhibition of iron nerve." In the heat of the contest the Danville connection was almost forgotten in the attack on Morehead. The former was defeated by a strictly sectional vote; but Morehead achieved, according to all testimony, both contemporary and subsequent, a great personal triumph.

The North Carolina Railroad was only one link in the great State system which Morehead contemplated. As he himself expressed it this system was to include "one great leading trunk line of railway

from the magnificent harbor of Beaufort to the Tennessee line." Writing in 1866, he attributed the conception of this scheme to Joseph Caldwell and Judge Gaston, adding:

"Charter after charter, by the influence of these great men, was granted to effect the work, but the gigantic work was thought to be too much for the limited means the State and her citizens could then command, and the charters remain monuments of *their* wisdom and our folly, or inability to carry them out. A more successful plan it is hoped was finally adopted—to do this great work by sections. The North Carolina Railroad . . . was the first [section] undertaken."<sup>1</sup>

The other sections were to be built between Goldsboro and Beaufort and between Salisbury and the Tennessee boundary. In accordance with this plan the Legislature, in 1853, incorporated "The Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad Company," and "The North Carolina and Western Railroad Company," to which Governor Morehead referred as "the contemplated extensions of the North Carolina Railroad." Immediately after the passage of these acts, Governor Reid ordered President Morehead and the directors of the North Carolina Railroad to make the necessary surveys. In an open letter to the Greensboro *Patriot*, Governor Morehead said of this order:

"I desire to give this pleasing intelligence to the friends of these enterprises, through your valuable paper, with an assurance that the work will be com-

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1. Letter to the Stockholders of the North Carolina Railroad Co. Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Meeting, July 17, 1866.

menced at as early a day as practicable. . . . Not a moment is to be lost. The deep, deep regret is that these extensions are not now in full progress of construction. The giant strides of improvement around us should arouse us to action. The ignominious and pusillanimous complaint that Nature has done so little for us is a libel upon the old dame. Let us see if it is not. . . . We have at the eastern terminus of one of these extensions one of the finest harbors, at Beaufort, for all commercial purposes, on the whole Atlantic coast. And if the improvements at the mouth of Cape Fear shall succeed, as it is hoped they will, we shall have another port surpassed by few, if any, in the South. . . . But it may be asked, what commerce have we to require such a port as Beaufort? Let the answer be, the commerce of the world. Look at the location of this port—placed at the end of the North Carolina coast, which projects like a promontory into the Atlantic, midway and within sight of the great line of navigation between the North and the South, and within thirty minutes' sail of the ocean. Nature made it for a stopping place of commerce—the halfway house between the North and the South, where steamers may get their supplies of anthracite, semi-bituminous and bituminous coal. . . . But let us take a western view of the extensions. The road running from Beaufort along the Central Railroad [the North Carolina Railroad] and to the Tennessee line and thence along the lines already in progress of construction to Memphis will not vary one degree from a due west course. Extend the same line westward (and I predict it will surely be done) to the city of San Francisco, which is to become the great emporium of the East

India trade, and who can doubt that the trade of the Mississippi Valley, as well as that of the East Indies and China will crowd our ports?"<sup>1</sup>

Under Morehead's supervision, the work of both the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad, and the Western North Carolina Railroad was inaugurated. On June 17, 1858, the former was completed and ready for trains from Goldsboro to Beaufort Harbor; and a few months thereafter found trains running over the latter to within four miles of Morganton, while the entire route to the Tennessee line had been surveyed and partly graded. In 1866 a bill drawn in accordance with the original plan, was introduced in the Senate to consolidate these two roads and the North Carolina Railroad under the name of "The North Carolina Railroad Company." Morehead, now approaching the end of his long and useful career, strongly endorsed and supported this measure. One of his last public utterances was an appeal to the stockholders of the North Carolina Railroad Company to throw their powerful influence in favor of the consummation of the great plans for which he had given the best service of his life. After giving a brief resume of the railroad work done in the State he said:

"Here let us pause and take a survey of what has been done in *seven* years towards this great work. From Beaufort Harbor to Goldsboro the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad Company have built ninety-six miles. From Goldsboro to Charlotte you [the North Carolina Railroad Co.] have built two hundred and twenty-three miles. From Salisbury to within four miles of Morganton the Western

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1. Raleigh Register, June 25, 1853.

North Carolina Railroad have built seventy-six miles . . . making in all three hundred and ninety-five miles, from which deduct forty-three miles from Salisbury to Charlotte, and we have actually built of this great line three hundred and fifty-two miles in one continuous line. Think of it! Seven years! In the lifetime of a State or nation seven years is but as a moment in its existence. It would not cover the dawning of its existence. In the great day of a nation's improvements seven years would not be the sunrise of that day. We have done this great work in the twilight of our great day of internal improvement—a day which dawned so beautifully upon us, but which became enveloped in that gloom which shrouds the nation in mourning. But let us not despair. The day which dawned so beautifully upon us will yet reach its meridian splendor. Then let us be up and doing . . . and then the hopes, the dreams of the great and good Caldwell and Gaston will be realized. . . . You have the honor of being the pioneers in this great work executed in sections. Do yourselves now the honor to consolidate the whole and complete the original design. You, the most powerful and most independent of the three corporations, can, with much grace, propose to your sister corporations upon terms of justice and equity manifesting selfishness in naught but your name. Yield not that. The new consolidated corporation should be still "The North Carolina Railroad Company." This will be a corporation worthy of you, of your State, and of the great destinies that await it."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Letter to Stockholders, July 17, 1866.



What this great destiny was no man had foreseen so clearly as he. The traveler of 1914 along the line of the North Carolina Railroad sees the fulfilment of Morehead's dreams of 1850. He finds himself in one of the most productive regions of the New World. He traverses it from one end to the other at a speed of forty miles an hour, surrounded by every comfort and convenience of modern travel. He passes through a region bound together by a thousand miles of steel rails, by telegraph and telephone lines, and by nearly two thousand miles of improved country roads. He finds a population engaged not only in agriculture, but in manufacturing, in commerce, in transportation, and in a hundred other enterprises. Instead of a few old fashioned handlooms turning out annually less than \$400,000 worth of "home-made" articles, he hears the hum of three hundred and sixty modern factories, operating two millions of spindles and looms by steam, water, and electricity, employing more than fifty millions of capital, and sending their products to the uttermost ends of the earth. His train passes through farm lands that, since Morehead began his work, have increased six fold in value, that produce annually ten times as much cotton and seventy-five times as much tobacco. From his car window instead of the four hundred and sixty-six log huts that passed for schoolhouses in 1850, with their handful of pupils, he beholds a thousand schoolhouses, alive with the energy and activity of one hundred thousand school children. His train carries him from Goldsboro through Raleigh, Durham, Burlington, Greensboro, High Point, Lexington, Salisbury, Concord, Charlotte—villages that have grown into cities, old fields

and cross roads that have become thriving centers of industry and culture. Better than all else, he finds himself among a people, no longer characterized by their lethargy, isolation and ignorance, but bristling with energy, alert to every opportunity, fired with the spirit of the modern world, and with their faces steadfastly set toward the future.

The foundation on which all this prosperity and progress rests is the work done by John M. Morehead or inspired by him. No well informed man can be found today in North Carolina who will dispute his primacy among the railroad builders of the State. The North Carolina Railroad, the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad, the Western North Carolina Railroad, the connecting link between the North Carolina and the Richmond and Danville railroads from Greensboro to Danville, all bear witness of his supremacy in this field. In one of the finest passages of his message to the General Assembly in 1842 he urged the building of good country roads; today there are five thousand miles of improved rural highways in North Carolina. He recommended the building of a Central Highway from Morehead City through Raleigh to the Tennessee line; today we have just witnessed the completion of a great State Highway piercing the very heart of the State almost along the very route he suggested seventy years ago. He suggested plans for extensive improvements of our rivers and harbors; today a "thirty-foot-channel-to-the-sea" has become the slogan of our chief port and the National Government is spending annually hundreds of thousands of dollars in the improvement of the Cape Fear, the Neuse, the Pamlico and other rivers of Eastern North Carolina. He urged the construction by the National

Government of an inland waterway for our coast-wise vessels through Pamlico Sound to Beaufort harbor; seventy years have passed since then, this enterprise has become national in its scope, the Federal Government has assumed charge of it, and the whole nation is anticipating the completion in the near future of an inland waterway from Maine through Pamlico Sound and Beaufort Harbor to Florida. First of all our statesmen Morehead realized the possibility of establishing at Beaufort a great world port; and although this dream has not yet been realized there are not lacking today men noted throughout the business world for their practical wisdom, inspired by no other purpose than commercial success, who have not hesitated to stake large fortunes on the ultimate realization of this dream also. A twentieth century statesman sent before his time into the world of the nineteenth century, Governor Morehead, as a distinguished scholar has declared, "would have been more at home in North Carolina today than would any other of our ante-bellum governors. He has been dead forty years, and they have been years of constant change and unceasing development. But so wide were his sympathies, so vital were his aims, so far sighted were his public policies, and so clearly did he foresee the larger North Carolina of schools, railroads and cotton mills, that he would be as truly a contemporary in the twentieth century as he was a leader in the nineteenth."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Smith, C. A.: "John Motley Morehead." Biographical History of N. C., Vol. 2, pp. 250-59.















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